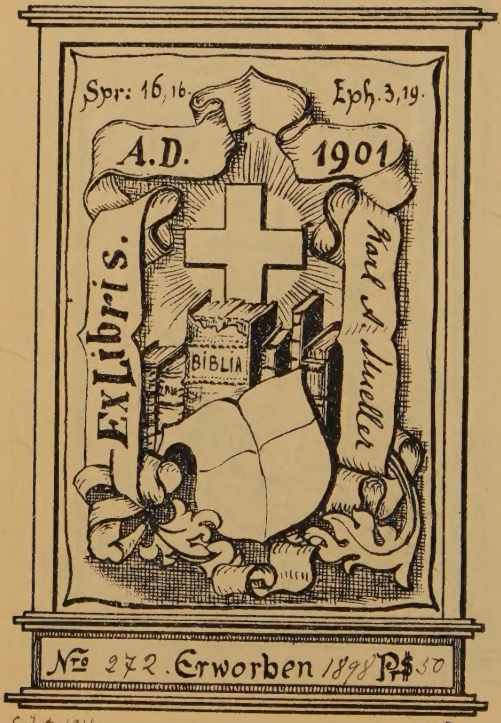
The Spirit of Love

by Fred^k D. Maurice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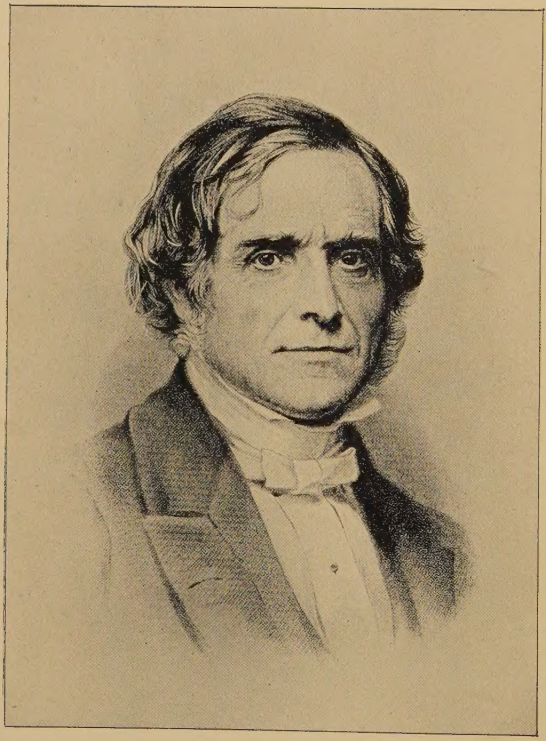
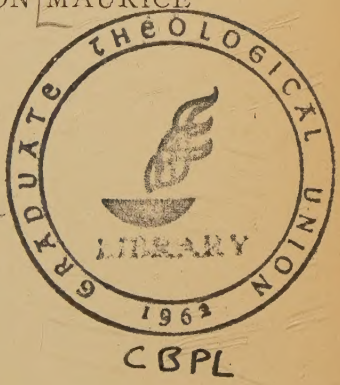


Frederick Denison Maurice.

THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

BY

FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE



NEW YORK: 46 EAST FOURTEENTH STREET
THOMAS Y. CROWELL & COMPANY
BOSTON: 100 PURCHASE STREET

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Jul 1911

THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

AND OTHER SERMONS.

I.

THE SPIRIT OF LOVE.

Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour to him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy upon him. Then said Jesus, Go, and do thou likewise. — ST. LUKE x. 36, 37.

I SPOKE to you last week of the law that was written on stones, and of the law that is written on men's hearts. There is more to be said about this matter yet. I think the Gospel to-day may make it clearer to us. Be sure that you remember who it is that causes the deafest ear to hear, and then you will ask him that you may take in his own wonderful words.

On a certain day, St. Luke says, Jesus was telling his apostles that their eyes and ears

were blessed, for that they saw things which prophets and kings had desired to see and had not seen, and to hear and had not heard.

The apostles, you know, were fishermen, poor men. What could it mean that they were better off than all the great men of their own country, and of other countries, who had lived before them? They must have been pondering this thought in their minds, when one of the learned men of the Jews came up to Jesus, and said, "Master! what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" This lawyer thought he had kept the commandments; he did not remember that he had ever committed any great offence. But he supposed that was not enough to get eternal life; he must do something very special to please God, if he was to win such a prize as that. He had heard that Christ spoke of eternal life, and told his disciples that they might possess it. The lawyer asked him, How can I get this life? What shall I do to please God, and obtain a reward which other men have not?

Our Lord did not answer him as he expected. He did not say, I know a secret which men in general do not know. I can tell you a new way of gaining this life which you have never heard. But he said, "What is written in the Law?" "You are a lawyer; you are reading in the law continually. Has that told you nothing about eternal life?" Then the lawyer bethought him of some words in the Book of Deuteronomy, where it is written, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." He had often read these words, and it came into his mind that perhaps the answer to his question might be there. If he loved God and loved his neighbor, he might have the reward he wanted; all that any man could have. Our Lord told him he was right; if he did that, he would live.

But the lawyer was not satisfied; I suppose that he was never less satisfied.

For the thought struck him, Have I ever done this? Can I do this? If I had been

bidden to bear some heavy burden; to torture myself in some strange way; even to kill myself, I could have done that. But when I am commanded to love — that is another thing altogether. Am I more loving because I have been told that it is right to be so? If I can only obtain eternal life at this price, shall I ever obtain it? I fancy these thoughts must have been in his mind first, but then came another. Was the law clear enough? It talked about his neighbor, but it did not say who his neighbor was. St. Luke says he was wishing to justify himself; not that anybody had found fault with him, but that some one was saying to him in his heart, "Learned lawyer as thou art, thou hast not kept the law;" and he wanted to silence that voice; it tormented him.

But he had asked Jesus, Who is my neighbor? and he was to have his answer. The Lord told him a story. Again it was not what he supposed it would be. It was the story of a poor man — a Jew — who went down from the chief city of Judæa to Jericho. That was

a very dangerous road, and the man fell among thieves. He was stripped of his raiment, and he was left half dead. A priest — the most holy man among the Jews — one who offered sacrifices to God for the people, one who blessed the people in God's name, came travelling that way. The wounded man was there — one of his own countrymen — one of those for whom he presented prayers and sacrifices, and whom he was to bless. But the priest did not think this man was his neighbor. He went on and left him. Then came a Levite, one of the same tribe of the Jews with the priest. His business was especially to interpret the law to the people — that law which said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." He looked at the wounded man, but he did not think that he was his neighbor; he passed by on the other side. Not long after, a Samaritan rode by. The man was not his countryman; he was not one of his friends; he belonged to a people with whom his people had no dealings. Moreover, the Samaritan was not considered a holy or

religious man by the Jews at all; quite the contrary: they thought him a man whom God abhorred; one who could not possibly have eternal life. But this Samaritan *did* look upon the wounded man as his neighbor; he stopped his journey to help him. He poured oil and wine into his wounds; he set him on his own beast; he took him to an inn, and bade the landlord take care of him; and he said, as he went away, that whatever more was spent upon the poor traveller, when he came again, he would repay.

The lawyer had to listen to this tale. And then he was asked —

"Which now of these three — the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan, was neighbour to him that fell among thieves?" He did not quite like to say the Samaritan; that would have been too hard a word for him to speak. But he said, "He that shewed mercy on him;" and then our Lord bade him go and do like the man whom he thought most meanly of, and whom he regarded as God's enemy.

Now let us think of this story. You see

that the priest and the Levite knew the law, which was written in a book, perfectly. They had nothing to learn about that. The words of it rose at once to their lips; they could confound any one who disputed it. And yet when they were called to fulfil this law — when their neighbor lay on the ground needing their help, — they did not remember it at all. It was a long way from them. They were to love their neighbor as themselves, no doubt. But who was their neighbor? Not this poor creature, though he was a Jew, a son of Abraham, an heir of the covenant. They owed him nothing; they were going on their own errands; what was he to them? That is to say, they had the law of love upon tables, but they had it not written on their hearts. They were serving God for hire; they could do things which they thought would profit them, and avoid things which they thought would injure them: but they did nothing because they had God's mind; they did nothing because they felt to men as he feels towards them.

But this Samaritan, though he had never

studied the words of the law as they had, though he had not a hundredth part of the blessings which belonged to them; though he had probably a great many mistakes and confusions in his head, from which they were free, had this law of love in his heart, and showed that he had; God had written it there. And, therefore, he did not ask whether this poor half-dead traveller by the roadside belonged to his village, or his town, or his country, or his religion. He had nothing to do with any of these questions, supposing there was any one able to answer them. This was his neighbor, for he was a man. That was quite enough, and therefore he at once did what his neighbor wanted, what he would have had another do to him.

Here was a lesson for the lawyer; one which he might be learning day by day, which would last him as long as he remained on earth, and long after that. If he would keep God's commandments, he must give up his pride as a lawyer, his pride as a Jew; he must become simply a man, just like this poor despised Sa-

maritan. He must understand that God cared for men, and therefore he must care for them. He must ask God continually to show him how he cared for them, and to give to him that will, that spirit, which is in himself, otherwise he would continue hard as the stones on which the commandments were written; otherwise he might have the highest reputation among men, and yet be abominable in the sight of God; otherwise he might be trying to win eternal life, and really be sinking deeper and deeper into death.

And now you will understand, I think, why the eyes and ears of the disciples, fishermen as they were, had a blessing which did not belong to all the great men and wise men that had been in the world before them. Some of those great and wise men had had this law proclaimed to them in direct words, and had seen it written in letters. But that was not enough for them. They knew it was to be obeyed; they felt they could not obey it while it was outside of them. They wanted to have it in them, and to be governed by it altogether.

But the more they wanted this, the more they felt how unlike their mind was to God's mind; how short they fell of the love which was in him, and which he wished to be in them. There were others who had never heard the law in words, or seen it in letters, yet God had written it in their hearts, and it had come forth in such acts as this of the good Samaritan; but they cried and sighed like the others over the selfishness which they found in themselves and in the world; they asked, "When will God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven? when will there be one to do it perfectly?"

Both, therefore, those to whom the law came outwardly, and those to whom it came only within, cried for the same person. They cried for a Son of God who should show them what God's truth and charity is; they cried for a Son of man who should show them how a man may be the perfect image of God; they cried for a King who should reign over their hearts, and make them like himself. And now says our Lord to his disciples, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see that Son of God who can

show you what the Father is; that Son of man who perfectly delights to do his Father's will, and to finish his work; that King who can govern you according to his pleasure. Blessed are your ears, for he is speaking to you, and commanding you." Long afterwards they will have recollected how the lawyer's question, and our Lord's parable, came in just when they had been considering what their blessing was. And they will have said to themselves, "Yes, truly, blessed are our eyes, for we have seen him who has met with us all lying sick and wounded and half dead; who has gone about healing men and restoring them, without asking whether they were his friends or his enemies, but caring for them all as his brethren. Blessed are our eyes, for we have seen him who was called a Samaritan by the Jews; whom they despised, because he mixed with publicans and sinners; whom they cast out as a blasphemer. Blessed are our ears, for we have heard him speak God's words; we have heard him bid us go and do as he has done; and suffer as

he has suffered. He has made us content to be called Samaritans, or worse names than that, if we can but pour oil and wine into the wounds of men that are perishing. Blessed are we; for we know what eternal life is now, since we have seen Jesus Christ, and have perceived what life there was in him. This was the life which he received from the Father. This was the life which he has bestowed upon us. We are not to do something great that we may obtain it. He gives it us without money and without price. But when he has given it us, when he has poured his own Spirit upon us, it works within us. It stirs us up to act as if men were our own neighbors, our brethren as well as his."

This was what the disciples thought long afterwards; but they did not think these things — they scarcely knew what our Lord meant — they never got the blessing which he said was theirs, till he was gone out of their sight. Then it was, when he had ascended on high, that they began to feel who had been with them, and who was with

them still; then they began to preach to all men, "He is your king as well as ours, he is with you as well as with us; he has given us his Spirit, his life of love, he will give it to you." Then they began to treat all men — Jews, Samaritans, heathen — as brethren; then they could say boldly to their hearers, "Go, and do you likewise." And therefore, brethren, I say, you and I have all the blessing they had, and the only question is whether we will use it or cast it away. That is a very serious question indeed for us, one and all. It is a very serious one for us who are, like the Levites of the Jews, called to teach you about God's laws, and, like the priests, to lead you in your prayers, and to present the perfect sacrifice of Christ for you to God, and to direct you unto the witnesses of his love, and to bless you in Christ's name. For we may become just as tough and hard-hearted as these Jewish priests and Levites became. If we are left to ourselves, we shall be harder and colder than all people, because those who are in the habit of using holy

words and doing holy acts are more in danger of losing the sense of them, and becoming stupid and indifferent, as if they meant nothing, than those who are less familiar with them. It is a terrible fact, but it is a fact. And, therefore, we must pray to God that he will not leave us to ourselves; that he will not let us sink down into hardness and carelessness about our fellow-creatures; that he will stir us up to think of them; that he will quicken us with his own Divine love; that he will make us true witnesses for him by our acts as well as our words; and then what we say and what we do will not only be for ourselves, but for you. If we want to get eternal life for ourselves, as the lawyer did, we shall not get it; if we are willing to receive it from Christ that others may share it with us, he will give it us abundantly, and then the very humblest of us will be able to go and do like the man whom we have heard of to-day. He was merely an ordinary person with very few advantages, as I have told you; people

who thought highly of themselves thought meanly of him. But because he had been taught to think of men as his brethren, the sons of one Father, he did an act which Christ owned. Christ said, "That was my act; God himself inspired it." And let each one of us say to himself, "Christ the Son of God died and rose again for me, and for all who dwell about me, for all my neighbors and kinsfolk, for every stranger that comes in my way, and for all sick and wounded people, and for all sinful people; Christ died and rose again for them, and he is their Lord and their brother as well as mine. And his will is to do them good; and his will is that we should work with him to do them good, to raise them out of the dust, to heal their wounds, to give them rest. He commits them to us, and he will come again to see whether we have fulfilled our trust or not. And when he comes he will say — for he has told us so — "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of my brethren, ye did it unto me."

II.

THE LAW OF LIBERTY.

So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. — ST. JAMES ii. 12.

My friends, do you think it is liberty for a man to be left to do what he likes? I do not know any slavery so hard as that. A drunkard does what he likes, and so he becomes utterly unable to govern himself. He does the maddest things. He ruins his wife and children. That comes of a man having his own way. He is dragged along into courses that he knows to be utterly vile. He says in his misery, "I could not help it; my inclinations had the mastery over me." That is to say, he did what he liked to do, and his likings were the cruellest tryants over him. There are none so bad, none that treat a man so unmercifully, that beat him and trample upon him so terribly.

Do you wish to know how we may get the

better of these tryants, let them be ever so savage, even when they have brought us down ever so low? I believe the gospel which St. Paul preached to us this morning tells us the secret. I believe we may learn it from what is said about the law of liberty by St. James this afternoon.

St. Paul told us that he had a gospel or good news to preach about our Lord's resurrection. Christ, he says, has risen from the dead; he won the victory over sin and over death; he won it for us. If we trust in him, the battle may be a very sharp one, but we shall prevail in it; he will be found mightier than all our enemies, yes, mightier than our own inclinations, mightier than death, mightier than hell and the devil. That was the good news which this apostle proclaimed to the people of Corinth who lived in a very loose, corrupt city. That is his good news to all of us.

St. James has good news for us too, though he speaks in a somewhat different way, though he seems as if he were using harsher language. He tell us of a law, a law which God has

made for us, a law which it was destruction to disobey. He puts the case very strongly. He says that if we break one part of God's law, we break it all. We cannot make a bargain that we will keep the sixth commandment if we are only allowed to break the seventh or the eighth. That plea, St. James says, will not answer. The same God who bids us not commit murder, bids us not commit adultery; he will have us submit to him altogether if we submit at all. But then St. James calls the law which God requires us to obey a law of liberty. How is that? Because the God who commands us not to kill will enable us to overcome the desire to kill, the brutal, savage anger that might set us on to plot against a neighbor's life. Because the God who commands us not to commit adultery or to steal would break the desires that lead us to ruin the character and peace of a neighbor or the goods of a neighbor — that is to say, God will deliver us from the chains that are strongest upon us, and that bind us most closely, and that no man is able to undo; God would make us free. Has not St. James then a right to call this law a law of liberty?

"Now," he says, "so speak and so do, as those who shall be judged by this law of liberty." Let us consider how it is possible to follow that precept.

I. What does the apostle mean by saying that we shall be judged by the law of liberty? He means that God will not say this to a man, "Why hadst thou such and such a bad desire?" but this, "Why didst thou not ask me to set thee free from the desire, to give thee power over it? That is what I promised when I told thee not to do this thing and that thing. I know what evil tempers and inclinations are in thee. I know thou canst not prevail against them by any strength which is in thee. But I wanted thee to trust in me; to seek my strength when thou wert weakest; to hope in my power of raising thee when thou wert most utterly down. I did not give thee my law to frighten thee away from me, but to draw thee to me, that thou mightest find out what need my children have of me, that thou mightest understand how near I am to them all." Then thou wilt cry, as David cries in the Psalms,

"Judge me, O God! and plead my cause against my enemies." "Thou seest how these bad desires press upon me, how this evil spirit tempts me. Thou understandest my dangers much better than I understand them. But I belong to thee. Thou hast created me; thou hast redeemed me by thy Son; thou lovest me for his sake. Support me, then, against those that rise up against me. Be upon my side, thou Judge of the whole earth, when I am ready to yield to those oppressors of mine. They are not my lords; thou art my Lord. Oh, put them down!" If we pray thus, and believe thus, we shall find that we are under a law of liberty; we shall find that it is a great and blessed thing to have One who sees into the depths of our hearts, and judges righteously.

II. Then, secondly, St. James bids us *speak* as if we were to be judged by this law of liberty. Speak to your own hearts as if that were so. Speak to your neighbor as if that were so. Do not say to your heart, "There is no great harm in yielding to this bad

habit; in making myself a beast; in saying hard, cruel, blasphemous words; God is so merciful that he will not mind it much." But say, "God is so merciful, so good to me, that he will not have me make myself a beast; he will not have me use hard and cruel and blasphemous words. He loves me too well not to forbid my doing that — not to punish me for doing it, not to give me help that I may not do it." And speak to your neighbor and your child in the same way. Do not revile him for the wrong tempers you see in him, for the evil acts which you see him committing. Own to him that there is in you the same evil which there is in him. Own that you might do just as bad things as he does. But say to him, "My friend! God wishes you and me to be free from our evil tempers, to prevail against them. He has put us under a law of liberty; he would have us be true men. Let us turn to him, and he will make us true men. He will enable us to hate the things which he hates, and which are for our ruin, and to

love the things which he loves, the things which are for our peace and blessing."

That is, *speaking* as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. But St. James adds, "So *do* as those who are to be judged by it." That he tells us is less easy. We may talk wonderfully well about the goodness of God and our sinfulness; but when the moment comes which shows us how sinful we are, we may not be at all ready for it; we may stumble miserably, just as if there were no good God to hold us up. We do not come here to the church that we may say a great many prayers, but that we may find out what we are to do in those sharp times when no mortal is near, to put us in mind what we should do when it would be little aid to us if any mortal were near. We come to be told of a very present Helper in our need; of One who knows our necessities before we ask, and our ignorance in asking; of One who declares his almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity. If there is such a One, if he is the judge of the whole

earth, and the judge of each of us, we may so do as if there were. When we are not taught that God is our Friend and our Deliverer, we are very apt to think of him as our enemy and our oppressor; we fancy it would be a good thing to be out of his way; a good thing to be hidden from him; a good thing that he should not be our judge. We learn in church what kind of Being he is; that he is one in whom we may take refuge; that we have got very cruel enemies, who are bent upon destroying us, but that he is the God of salvation; *that* always; *that* to all people. Instead, then, of turning from him, our wisdom at every moment is to turn to him. We may be sure that he does not change, however we may change. We may be sure that we never need a protector against him; that we need his protection every moment against a spirit of malice and cruelty that is seeking to devour us. St. James in his first chapter—the one before that we read this afternoon—says a very wonderful thing; that we are to count it all

joy when we fall into different temptations. And he gives the reason for that strange sentence — that by these temptations we are taught faith or trust in God; we find that he makes a way for us to escape from our temptations. In the lesson we have heard this afternoon, he teaches us that by this faith in God we are enabled to do what is right and good; he teaches us that our faith is not worth anything, that it is not really faith in the living God, unless it leads us to do those things which he works in us to do.

So you understand what he means by bidding us *do* as those who shall be judged by the law of liberty. He bids us believe in a God who is without variableness, or the least shadow of a turning; a God from whom all good and perfect things come; a God who is always ready to be our Deliverer in every dark hour. He bids us ask what we have asked to-day in the Litany, "In the hour of death, in the day of judgment, good Lord deliver us." Never doubt that when we prayed so, we prayed according to the will

of our Father in heaven. When we prayed so, we gave up all right to judge other men, we asked God to judge us all; we asked him to give us grace that we might be delivered from our own darkness, and come into his light. If we pray that prayer truly, we shall not wish that the Lord should not come forth to judge us; we shall cry as the writer of the Ninety-Eighth Psalm — which we often use in our afternoon service — cries, "Let the floods clap their hands, and let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth. With righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity."

III.

TRUTH.

But lo! thou requirest truth in the inward parts, and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly. — PSALM li. 6.

WE have read the psalm from which these words are taken to-day. It was written many thousands of years ago; it was written in a land thousands of miles away; it was written most likely by a king. Yet you and I have joined in singing it; we have taken it as ours. And that is not all; the man — or the king, if he was a king — who wrote it, had committed a great crime; there was the guilt of blood on his soul; he had broken the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," to all appearance, also, the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Now, what brings us and this man who lived in other days and so far away, together? How can a king speak for us humble people? How

can a man who had done such horrible acts confess for us who cannot charge ourselves with them?

My friends, here is the reason. This king found he had something upon the heart within him which he could not get rid of; which all his friends and kinsfolk and subjects could not help him to get rid of. He tried to forget it; he tried what pleasure would do; he tried what business would do; he tried what making prayers could do — but it was no use. There the burden was still. He felt as if a hand was heavily laid upon him. The moisture seemed to be dried up in him like the fields in a drought. What was this? The man that he had killed could not speak and accuse him, his lips were silent forever; the woman he had tempted did not accuse him, he had made her a queen. But some one accused him; who was it? He tried to escape from the thought, but at last it came full and clear upon him. God is accusing thee! God knew what thou wast doing, if no one else knew it. God has found thee out. The Judge

of all the earth has taken account of thy deeds. It is he whose hand is upon thee. It is he who is making the time that has been, and that is, and that is coming, all very terrible to thee.

Now, at first, this discovery must have added very much to his pain and horror. "What, God himself is fighting with me! He who is just and pure has seen that I am not just and pure. How can I escape from him? If I go up to heaven, he will be there. If I go down to hell, he will be there. And wherever I am, he will feel to me as he feels to me now. He will not change. He will not be less just and pure a thousand years hence. And I, what shall I be?"

Then this thought came to him, "Is he so just and pure? Why, then, he would have me just and pure. What he would have me be, he can cause me to be. He can take this foulness out of my heart; he can turn me into a right man again. Yes! that is the thing I want; the only thing I want! I have done wrong, and I must suffer for the wrong. But God can give me a right heart and a clean conscience.

He can purify me; he can restore me. Therefore, instead of seeking to escape from him, I will arise and go to him. I will tell him how the case stands with me; I will tell him how this sin is corrupting me, and tormenting me, and destroying all the life in me. I will ask him thoroughly to purge my heart and soul of it. I believe he can do that. I believe he will do it." Well, that is what this psalm is about from beginning to end. If you read it over to yourselves again, you will see that it is the cry of a man who knows that he has been wrong, utterly wrong; he knows that his wrong has been discovered, not by some mortal, but by the God that never slumbers nor sleeps. The man that he knows may ask him, the God of all right, to deliver him from his wrong and set him right.

And, therefore, my friends, this psalm is for all people whatsoever, in all countries, in all times, for kings and for beggars; for those who have committed great sins, and for those who have committed little sins; for those who feel a burden upon them too heavy to bear; for

him who only hears some slight whisper in his heart, saying, "All is not with thee as it should be. Thou oughtest to be a better man than thou art." Each of us may take this psalm to himself; each of us may pray it for himself. And I say boldly, we who are here to-day can understand it better, and turn it to better account, and join in it more thoroughly, than those could who lived in King David's days, or than all the people could for whom the Book of Psalms was chiefly written; for we can call him to whom David prayed, our Father. We can use that word, because Jesus Christ, his Son, who took our nature on him, and died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, has said, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." We can do it, because he has sent forth his Spirit into our hearts, that we may call him "Abba, Father," and may arise and go to him, and may confess all our evil to him, and may receive a right heart and a new spirit from him. Therefore, let us try to get the psalm well into our hearts. I think we shall do so best, if we consider that

one verse which I read to you as my text. If we take that in thoroughly, all the rest will come home to us, and will be clear to us.

There are two parts you see in the text. The first is this, "Thou requirest truth in the inward parts;" the second is this, "Thou shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly." I will speak to you a little of each.

"Thou requirest truth in the inward parts." That is to say, "Thou, O God! who knowest me altogether, who knowest my downsitting and my uprising, who are about my bed and about my path, thou wantest me to be a true man; thou wantest me to be true in my dealings, true in my speech, true to those that are above me and below me and my equals; and that I may be so, thou requirest me to be true in my own self, true in all that I plan and purpose. Thou requirest that I should not deceive myself, or persuade myself that I am better than I am, or that I know what I do not know. Thou requirest that I should be true when I come to kneel before thee, that I should not mock thee with idle,

vain words." "What," you say, "does God require all that of me, a poor, ignorant creature who have so little strength?" Yes, verily, God requires this of thee and of me, because we are his children, and because he is true, and because he would have us like him. God requires this of thee, because he would not have thee be miserable and a cause of misery to other people; for all misery comes out of falsehood. There would be no misery in the world if there was nothing but truth in the world. Nevertheless, this does sound like a very great thing to ask of creatures who have so much falsehood in them as we have; who have done so many untrue acts; who catch ourselves continually in untruths of word and deed. It does sound like a great thing to ask in a world where so many cheats are going on, and where they grow into customs before we are aware of it.

And, therefore, hear the sentence, "Thou shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly." That is to say, "As I go about in the world and mix with other men, I am very likely to get into false ways. They may flatter me, and

that may tempt me to be vain and conceited. They may treat me hardly, and that may tempt me to be cunning and treacherous. And I cannot keep myself from yielding to these temptations. I cannot hinder a number of false and evil thoughts coming to me when I am alone. But thou, O God, who requirest me to be true in the inward parts, thou canst give me the wisdom which I want. Yes! for I can tell thee of all my folly and weakness. I can ask thee to clear away my folly, and support my weakness; I can lay bare all that I have done and all that I am before thee; I can ask thee to reform me, because I cannot reform myself."

O my friends, in how many thousand circumstances may we turn these words to our use and blessing! Only let us remember these three things: 1st, What God is; that he is the all just and true. 2d, What we are without him, —all unjust and untrue. 3d, What he would have us be, and can enable us to be, —just and true, after the likeness of his dear Son. For our Lord Jesus Christ showed us

what God's truth is. He came from the God of Truth that he might deliver us from our lies, and might enable us to walk in his truth. And the Spirit who shows us our sins, and awakens us to repentance, is the Spirit of Truth of whom Christ has said, "He will guide us into all truth." So, every time you say, "Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep," you confess that God requires truth in your inward parts, and that you have not been true. And every time the minister says, "He pardoneth and absolveth," he means, God would set you free from your falsehood; God would make you know wisdom secretly. And when you say the Lord's Prayer, you ask that God's name, which is truth, may be "hallowed," and that God's kingdom of truth may come, and that God's will, which is the will of truth, may be done on earth as it is in heaven. Only be sure that what God requires is just what you require to make you blessed, and then you will ask for that, and he will give you more than you can ask or think.

IV.

STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS.

My strength is made perfect in weakness. — 2 Cor. xii. 9.

At a certain time in the life of the Apostle St. Paul, he was permitted to have a wonderful vision of the glory of God.

We, even you and I at this moment, are surrounded by this glory, we are in the midst of the heavenly kingdom, we are in the presence of Jesus Christ, and of God the Judge of all. If it pleased God to take the veil from off our hearts, we might any of us behold these wonders with our inward eye, as clearly as we behold the pillars and walls of this chapel with our outward eyes. The vision of the Eternal God might open upon us; we might feel that he was looking upon us. It is nothing strange, then, that God should, at times, bless those servants who

faithfully do his work, and long to know him better, with this new and amazing discovery. It is not meet that they should have it frequently; this world is a place of toil and tears. The belief that God is with us, the hope of seeing him as he is, the assurance that he loves us and is love, — these are to be our supports here; perfect vision is reserved for those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. But it is a gracious and comfortable token of God's mercy that he does not permit the fallen bodies of those who truly love him, to keep them even here from some taste of that joy which is to be their portion forever. And, surely, if we might suppose that any one would be thus honored, it was that St. Paul, who for the love of God and of man counted nothing dear unto himself, cheerfully bore all sorrows of body and mind, yea, would have been willing to be accursed from Christ for his brethren's sake. Surely, to comfort such a man in that bitter anguish of body and soul which was his daily portion, one might expect that glimpses would be

given him of the perfect beauty and loveliness of him in whom he believed, and of whom he was ready to testify even unto death.

And so it was. As the moon bursts forth sometimes from behind a cloud, and the traveller who has been walking in the dreary night, knowing it was there, and seeing the ground at his feet brighter for it, hails and blesses its beams, so all at once the spirit of St. Paul, wearied with this body of death, was refreshed with a vision of his Lord. Whether he was in the body or out of the body he could not tell; God only knew; but this he could tell, that he beheld those real things of which all things that we see here upon earth are but faint shadows, and that he heard words which it would not be lawful, no, nor possible, for human tongue to utter. Like that vision to the three older disciples on the mount, when the countenance of their Lord became changed, and his garment white as snow, and when they heard him talking with Moses and Elias, this also passed away; but the sense and the savor of it remained,

and fourteen years after, the remembrance of it was fresh in the apostle's heart, as if it had happened the day before.

But perhaps you may remember what a sight it was which Peter and James and John beheld when they came down with their Lord from the Mount of Transfiguration. A noisy crowd of people there were at the foot of that hill, a hum of confused, turbulent voices, men quarrelling and murmuring, and in the midst of all, a poor suffering boy, tossing about in a fit of epilepsy, which sometimes threw him into the fire, and sometimes into the water, and which no man had been able to cure. And perhaps you may remember what speech it was which our Lord had with his disciples as they were coming down from that glorious place into the midst of this tumult. He told them how he should be set at naught by elders and chief priests and scribes; how he should be scorned and spat upon; how he should be crucified; and how the third day he should rise again from the dead. Now that tumult and con-

fusion, and that boy in the epileptic fit, represent to us this world in which we are living, full of the strife of tongues, and sorrow, and misery in the midst of it all. And that prophecy which our Lord gave of what should happen to him, is a prophecy of something like what must happen to all his servants who are passing through this confused world. They, too, must be set at naught by the rulers and great men and wise men of the earth; they must be ready for scorn, and if not a violent death, yet death of some kind must end all this; and they, too, will rise again. St. Paul, when he had seen these wonderful sights, and heard these unspeakable words, came down again into this world of sin and misery, and he had to act in it, to witness for God in it, to bear its scorn, to love those who despised him, and at last to give up his body to death for his Master's sake, and for theirs. This was his appointed task. But though he was a brave man, one of God's bravest warriors, yet was he a weak, sinful man too. And pride, which was his

great snare once, which had led him to close his eyes fast against the light of the Sun of righteousness, till, by that sudden appearance, on the way to Damascus, Christ had opened them, this pride might rush in upon him again, and turn his new vision into a means of darkening him more than ever. For if God show a man a glorious thing, and he does not think of the thing that he has seen, but he thinks, "What a great man am I, that it was shown to me," then would it have been better for him that the blessing had never been imparted. St. Paul might have grown sick of his work, and have thought that he who had been in the third heaven had no need to be travelling to the ends of the earth, preaching the good news of Christ's kingdom to poor, ignorant, gainsaying men, who would not love him the more for his pains, but, perhaps, would count him their enemy because he told them the truth. St. Paul might have thought that his day of suffering was over, that it could not be meant he should go crying to his grave,

when he had seen the joyful things that lie beyond it. He might, as he says himself, have been puffed up with the abundance of his revelations. The sight of God might have been the means of filling him with the spirit of the devil.

You may think it strange that I should speak these things of the great and chosen apostle, or suppose that they could possibly happen to him. But, my brethren, we know from St. Paul himself that they might have happened to him. We know that every man here upon earth stands between two worlds; above him is the light and love and glory of God; this is the heaven of heavens: beneath him is pride and ignorance and despair and atheism; this is the pit of hell. And as any man may ascend up and see that love and glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, so any man may sink down into the pit, and God may be shrouded from his eyes, and he may be able to see nothing but himself and sin and death. It is no security to a man that he has done great things or beheld bright visions; these may be the very

cause of his downfall. If he learn to think that he has some great strength within him to do, some bright eye within him that can always see, his great doings and his glorious success will be the very means of separating him from the light and the life of God. He will feel that he can go on without God in the world; and God may leave him to try how far he can go. What security, then, has a man who, after all this glory, is yet in such peril? He may trust that the Lord in whom he has believed, who has shown him such marvellous things, will not suffer his foot to be moved. "He who keepeth him does not slumber or sleep." He knows when the enemy will take advantage of a man who is too high or too low, and he knows how to cross and defeat the designs of that enemy, —how to bring down those that are exalted, lest they should fall, and how to raise up those that are bowed down, lest they should lose all heart and hope.

My brethren, if a man be a teacher of others, a commissioned servant of God, a proclaimer of his name and of his kingdom, he is in the

front rank of God's army. He has marks and signs by which he is known to all; if he fall, there is a fright through all the troops. You may be sure, then, that the devil has a band of riflemen always aiming at him; to lead him into open sin, or secret pride, which will soon end in open sin, must be a great plot and purpose of his. Do you not think, then, that to strike at the heart of St. Paul, the most glorious of all these ministers, must have been his dearest wish? And how else do you suppose that the spirit of pride can insnare any of us so completely, as by infusing into us some of his own venom, by making us conceited of some gift of God, be it a little or a great one, and so leading us to use that gift against God himself?

But now, by what means was St. Paul delivered from this terrible danger? The Lord sent him, he says, a thorn in the flesh. What this was, it is a waste of time to inquire. St. Paul would have told us if it had been needful for us to know. This much we may be sure of, that it was some very sore trial, which did not only affect his body, though that may have been the

seat of it, but which disquieted and upset his whole mind, and made him understand that he was a poor, miserable, paltry creature after all. Whatever it was, it taught him that he was a man of flesh and blood, that the sufferings of his brethren were his sufferings, that their sins were his sins; it took him off the stilts, and brought him to feel that for all he was an apostle, for all he had been in the third heaven, he must walk this common earth, and bear its burdens, his own and other men's. At first, when he felt this trial, it seemed to him that it was a mighty hindrance to the labors which God had set him. It weakened his influence over others; it gave him wretched feelings of shame; it confused all his thoughts of God's ways to himself and to the world. It may have been in itself a little thing or a great thing; but a little thing will often prey upon a man's soul and eat the life out of it more than a great one. Perhaps the degradation of being so hurt by a little thing made him feel more bitterly that he was a man whom God had wonderfully exalted, and then had utterly cast down. Hope and

energy almost forsook him. One power, however, remained to him. His converse with the unseen world was over; he felt no longer as a citizen of heaven; he felt as the wretchedest worm of earth. But he had learnt that the wretchedest worm of earth can make his voice heard by him before whom angels veil their faces. "I prayed," he says, "thrice, that it might depart from me." In vain, as it seemed; the thorn remained, the anguish of his heart was not less. But, my brethren, the man who, when all things without and within are fighting against him, has made an effort to pray, who has compelled himself to cry, "Lord, have mercy upon me," though ten thousand feelings of pride and anger are closing his lips, and saying, "It is useless; thou shalt not do it;" the man who has sworn that he will pray though the words die in the effort to utter them—this man has won the greatest of all victories. To get into the third heaven is a light thing in comparison with this triumph over the powers of hell. He who does this has claimed the rights of a man. He has said, "I know that

there is a bond between me and the Omnipotent God. I know that I have a hold upon him who cannot change. I know that the agony and bloody sweat of Jesus have established an eternal union between the weakest of human beings and him who is, and who was, and who is to come." It was hard to bring forth the prayer — the struggle rent his soul asunder; but it did come forth, and the answer came forth too. It was this: "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness." "My grace is sufficient for thee." "In the time of thy darkest and dreadfullest necessity thou art not alone. Thou hast this miserable feeling of being alone, but it is not true. Down in the very depths of this being, where thy thoughts have never reached, is a fountain of life. He who cried, "Father, let this cup pass from me," and "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" he, even he is there. The springs of life seem to be dried up within thee, but it is that thou mayest discover the source of life.

All, and far more than this, was contained in these first words. For the apostle's consolation

at that moment they might have been enough. But though men are always craving for consolation, God has greater purposes with them than merely to give them consolation. He wishes to teach them of himself, and to make them teachers about himself to others. In the words which followed, "And my strength is made perfect in weakness," there was yet a deeper meaning for St. Paul and for you. Let us try to discover that meaning; and let us believe that Christ himself is feeding our spirits with it.

My brethren, it has pleased God that his own might and wisdom should be made known to us through beings of the same flesh and blood with ourselves. There is, indeed, might and wisdom throughout the universe in every star and insect and flower; but this might and wisdom would never be understood by us, if it were only shown us in this way. We must see *men* putting forth strength, and showing skill, and exercising kindness before us, and on our behalf, or we shall never know what strength and skill and kindness are. But when we do

see all this in our fellow-creatures, how shall we be taught that it did not dwell first in them, that there is an infinite strength and skill and kindness, from which theirs has come forth, and of which it is only the poor likeness? This can only be when we see by some clear token what these creatures are in themselves, what they would be if they were left naked and alone. Therefore, when God manifested himself perfectly to his creatures, in the Man Christ Jesus, in what wise did he declare himself? He brought the Man down into the lowest depth of humiliation and wretchedness, that it might be seen that all the strength and wisdom and love which were in him did not belong to him because he had flesh and blood, because he had the soul of a man, but because "it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell," because he was the Eternal Son of God. And as it was with the Master, so must it be with the disciple. The privilege of our being members of Christ's body consists in this, that we have the Spirit of God given us to dwell in us. And it must be seen and un-

derstood by all who behold, that it is by this spirit we act and speak and think; that whatever there is in us which is not helplessness, is his; whatever is not folly, is his; whatever is not malice and hatred and revenge, is his. Therefore it is that God makes strong men helpless, that all may know what it was that enabled them to lift their arms and move swiftly over the ground; therefore does he make wise men babble like children, that it may be seen who enabled them to discern more than their neighbors; therefore does he let kind and gracious men, when they forsake his guidance, show forth most godless and inhuman passions, that it may be seen who gave them any heart to be good. God's strength is made perfect in weakness. Because man is seen to be nothing, God is felt to be everything, and those things which make men most murmur against him, are the very means by which we are taught to know him and adore him. My brethren, till we get this thought into our hearts, everything in this world is cloudy and dark to us; when we receive it, everything

begins to be bright. I do not say that we become merry when we know this. We are in God's schoolhouse, under God's rod, chastised by him often, and when we have escaped from one chastisement needing another. It is a world where men must be sad who know themselves, and love their brethren, and are zealous for God. But yet I say, that all things begin to be bright, and that we feel they will grow brighter unto the perfect day. That there should be poor men in this world sighing and crying for their daily bread, what a sad and oppressive thought it is; but when we know that this poverty, this want of the things that we see and taste and handle, has led men to lift up their hands and hearts to an unseen Father, and ask him to look into their lonely souls and cheer them; and when we believe they were made poor on purpose that they might raise up this cry, and become acquainted with their true friend, and that he hears them, and hastens to reveal himself to them, and that there is joy among the angels of God, because they have found their Father's house—then we

can bear to look upon poverty, and say, "Verily, this too is God's gift, this is a token of God's love, his strength is made perfect in this weakness." It is a trying thing to witness health and strength departing from those who seemed best able to use them for the glory of God and the good of man; but when we know that it is not strong and healthy men who have done most work upon this earth; that feeble men have been enabled to suffer and to act, when the stout have been oftentimes restless and idle; and when we find that sickness brings down the self-sufficiency of men, and makes them lean their tottering frames upon an Almighty Friend—we learn that this too is God's gift; herein is his strength made perfect. It is a sadder sight when men upon whom God has bestowed great gifts of wit and wisdom turn them against him, and against their brethren, teaching them to worship themselves as gods, and yet tempting them so to indulge themselves that they become beasts. But when we consider that their sin is the greatest witness of the truth which they deny, that they prove

God to be just and loving and true, by showing what they are when they renounce him; we may believe that, even in this way, God's strength may be made perfect in weakness, and that he will show both that he needs not the help of the cunning artificer and the eloquent orator, and that they cannot prevail against the humblest of those who put their trust in him.

For this, brethren, is the lesson from the whole matter — the lowly and contrite heart is that which God seeks to form in us; without this, all other good things turn to evil; with this we may turn even the things which seem most evil into good. Therefore, all methods which he takes to deliver men from their pride are merciful and gracious; as such let us receive them, and then whether we are here on earth, or in the third heaven, all is well, for God has said that he will dwell with us.

V.

THE PUBLICAN.

I tell you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. — ST. LUKE xviii. 14.

Two men, it is said in the Gospel we have just read, went up into the temple to pray. They went to the same place; they went for the same end. They were both Jews, and they went to the place in which the Lord God had told the Jews that he would meet with them and hear them. They went to ask that he would do what he had promised.

Our Lord says one of these men went back to his house justified rather than the other. He returned with a lighter, freer heart. He had got the thing he sought for; our Lord tells us this; and he knows it. The hearts of these men are open to him. He under-

stands what they desire. He understands why one obtains what he desires and the other misses it.

And he wishes us to understand the secret also; for we are all interested in it. This story of the publican and the Pharisee is called a parable. That is to say, it is an example of what is going on in a thousand different places, in times thousands of years apart. It happened in the temple of Jerusalem. It happens in every English church. It happened when our Lord was upon earth; it happens in the year 1861.

What, then, was the difference between these two men — the Pharisee and the publican? Had the one who went down to his house justified some great advantage over his neighbor? No; he had, to all appearances, great disadvantages. He was a man in bad repute. He belonged to a class of men who did many evil things. People charged him with sharing in them. You see what the Pharisee thought of him. He thanked God that he was not like that publican or tax-

gatherer. He thought that the man who was praying a little way from him was very likely an unjust man or an extortioner; he knew that he had a bad name.

The Pharisee himself had a very good name. He was one of a class to whom the people looked up. He had a character to preserve. And he says — and for aught we know he says truly — that he had preserved it. He could not be accused of any crime against his fellow-creatures. He could not be accused of neglecting the service of his Creator.

So far all seems in his favor; all seems to go against the publican; and what is more, the publican thinks so himself. He does not try to prove that he has done his duty to God or his duty to his neighbor. He does not believe that he has. Nay, he is sure that he has not. He does not venture to raise his eyes to heaven. He smites upon his breast. He says, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

And what comes of this? *That* comes of it which God had said should come. He had bidden men who had any load upon their

hearts to come into his temple and lay it bare before him. He had bidden those who had broken his law to own that they had broken it. He had invited those who were not serving him as they wished to serve him, frankly to tell him that they were not. He had invited those who were not loving their neighbors as they wished to love them, not to keep that wrong to themselves, but to ask deliverance from it of him. The publican had done this. He was not satisfied with himself; he said that he was not. He could not say much about his trouble or his need. Perhaps he did not know precisely what it was, just as we often feel a pain or a sickness without knowing where it is. But he had come into the presence of One who understood what he did not understand. His muttered words even would be interpreted rightly. He was seeking the God of mercy; he was seeking the Deliverer from sin. "Be merciful to me a sinner," was enough for him.

Therefore he went down to his house justified. He could not justify himself. God had

justified him. He had given him a clean conscience and a right heart. His sin did not cleave to him any longer, did not press him down, did not take the strength out of him. He could say, "God counts it as his enemy even as I count it mine. He is my Lord; this sin is not my Lord, and shall not be. In his strength I will defy it."

Now, the Pharisee did not get this justification, for he did not desire it. He justified himself. He was content with his own thoughts and doings. He wanted nothing. He had prayed in the temple because he believed it was a proper and right thing to pray. He had not prayed because there was any divine blessing which he could not do without, any great curse from which he must be set free.

And so it will be, so it must be, our Lord says, always. Is it not reasonable? The God of grace and mercy gives to each that which he craves for; if we think all is well with us, he will leave us to try whether all is well. If we find that there is something not well, something that must be set right in us, he will set it right.

And yet, brethren, this is not all. God does not justify those who justify themselves, who trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others. But he does — like a merciful Father — show us that we cannot trust in ourselves, and that we are not righteous, and that we have no excuse for despising others. He lays bare the secret wrong that is in us. He makes us see that we are just as likely to fall into sin, that we have just as little strength of our own to do what is right, as any of our neighbors whom we have been looking down upon. He shows us that all our strength is in him. He humbles us when we are exalted in our own conceit, just that he may exalt us when he has humbled us. That is the course of his wise and gracious government with every one of us. Let every one of us try to understand it, and then we shall profit by all the things that befall us. We shall profit by the foolish and wrong doings that we have committed in time past. We shall profit, above all, by the prayers that we offer when we are alone, and when we come to this house.

1. We shall profit by all that befalls us. If it is good and necessary for most of us to be humbled — if we cannot be anything or do anything right till we are humbled, then be sure God means all that he sends us for this purpose. Sometimes it may be a great trouble, sometimes it may be a little vexing trouble which overtakes us. One may do the work as well as the other. One may bring down our self-confidence as well as the other. God knows which will do it best for each of us. Or he may send us good and bright days. They may tend to our humiliation as much as the others. We may wonder what right we have to them; how such people as we should have blessings that we have done so little for. Anything may turn to the increase of our pride if we receive it without asking for God's Spirit to make it good. Anything may help to take the pride out of us if his Spirit comes with it.

2. Yes, and therefore I say a man's past transgressions and his most easily besetting sin may be used, if he will use them, for this end. Sometimes a person is inclined to for-

get all the things he has done amiss in past times, and would fain think they have nothing to do with him now. Then up starts the recollection of some one of them. It flashes across him as he lies on a sick bed; he cannot throw it off. Or it comes to him in another way. He thought he had got rid of some bad habit — of drink perhaps. He supposes he is quite safe; but he meets an old companion. The old sin catches him and throttles him again. It was lying hid; but it was not gone. He said he had not that sin still; he deceived himself. Is that to make him despair? Is it to lead him to say, "I must be the slave of this wicked power. I must confess the devil for my ruler"? No; it is to make him cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner. I am worse and weaker than I knew. I find I cannot trust myself for an hour. The past evil comes back to me. It seems always present. But thou, O God, canst raise me out of it. It drives me to thee. Be merciful to me, not in sparing my sin, for that is my foe and my curse, but in separating me from it as far as

the East is from the West. And I am separate from it as far as the East is from the West, when I am finding my refuge and my home in thee."

And so you will see what I meant when I said that our Lord is teaching us to-day what all our prayers at church are for, and what all our prayers at home are for.

The first words you hear in church are a call to confess your sins. The first act you join in with the minister is that of owning to the Almighty and most merciful Father that you have erred and strayed from his way like lost sheep. That is to say, we are all treated alike. No one is allowed to trust in himself that he is righteous, and to despise others. Each brings his own burden. Each says, "Be merciful to me a sinner." Each cries against his own wrong; each asks for help against his own guilt. And yet we all come together. There is a common salvation for us. We call upon God as the Father of us all. We call on him in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who has redeemed us all; in whom there is no sin; in

whom he loves all, and is satisfied with all. While each is trying to stand on his own ground, while each is pleased and satisfied with himself, there is nothing but discontent, envying, and backbiting. When each one gives up his own pretension to be good, and trusts in the good God, and believes that that God has given up his Son for his neighbors as well as for himself, and asks for the loving Spirit to dwell with us all and keep us one, then do we indeed become Christ's family on earth, part of that great family in heaven and earth, of which he is the head and elder brother. And we may be sure that as we kneel by our bedsides, or as we cry when we are out in the field or at our work, "God be merciful to us sinners; keep us from doing this wrong thing; help us not to neglect this act of duty or of kindness," he will present that prayer before God. It will be joined to the prayer of that publican in the temple, and to all the good prayers that have been offered since the world began. And the man who has poured it out will go to his home with

a clean heart and right spirit, humbled in himself, exalted in God; waiting for the day when he who was humble and lowly and merciful shall be revealed in the glory of his Father and the holy angels, and when all pride and vanity and sin shall be banished out of his universe.

VI.

THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH.

I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. — GAL. v. 16.

THE Galatians, to whom St. Paul wrote these words, were a warm-hearted people, but they were very changeable. At one time they were exceedingly fond of St. Paul. They would have plucked out their own eyes, he says, to give them to him, if that would have done him any good. But within a short time they began to suspect him; they listened to people who said that he had deceived them, and that he was no true apostle. They counted him an enemy, and many of them became his enemies. How had this come to pass? It had come to pass thus: St. Paul had brought them a good message. He said that the Eternal God had sent his Son

into the world to adopt them into his family, to make them his own sons and daughters. He said that through his Son, God had sent his Spirit to dwell with them, that they might know him and love him, and that they might love one another. The Galatians had listened to these words; they had never heard any that were like them before. They had thought the powers above looked very enviously at them, and wanted a great many things of them; they thought they had done wrong, and offended these powers; they thought if there was one power greater than all, they must have offended him most, and he must be the most angry with them. How wonderful it was to be told that the Lord of all — he who had created them — loved them; that he felt to them as a father feels to children who have forgotten him and gone away from his house; that he was himself fetching them back; that they were not to turn away from him because they had done bad things, but might turn to him, and he would put the evil from them, and

blot it out. And how wonderful to hear that they had the Spirit of the Father near them at all times to help them and strengthen them; how wonderful to have all this sealed and assured to them by this token, that they were baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And yet the hearts of these Galatians said this good news must be true; and they would have been glad to put out their own eyes for his sake who had brought them the news.

But as time went on, they began to feel bad thoughts rising in them; and they yielded to these bad thoughts, and bad acts came out of them; they were bitter and cruel to one another; they cheated each other; they fell into wantonness and drunkenness, just as they had done when they were heathens — just as the heathen people around them did. "Well," they began to say to themselves, "but how can this be if St. Paul was right in what he said to us at first; did he not speak of our being cleansed from our sins? did he not

speak of our being made new men? But our sins are with us still; we are just the same now that we were before." Then came people who said to them, "Yes, Paul has indeed led you wrong. This baptism into the name of Christ does not mean what he would persuade you that it means. You are not really taken to be children of God. If you would get any advantage from Christ's coming, you must become like us Jews. You must come under our law; then perhaps God may give you some blessings hereafter. But you must not begin with thinking that you are already delivered and brought into God's family." The Galatians gave heed to what these men said, and so they counted St. Paul for their enemy.

St. Paul was very much grieved; but the pain they caused him was nothing. He knew that he had told them the truth, and that these people who had come among them and slandered him were not telling them the truth. He knew that they wanted the truth which he had told them; that they could not

be right and good men without it. But how then could he account for their having fallen into these bad ways? How could he justify what he had said to them about their being children of God and members of Christ, and of their having the Spirit of God with them to help and teach them? Could he have meant that really? Must he not have meant it for some of them, and not for others?

No! what St. Paul said to all, he intended all to receive. If it was true about one, it was true about another. If *any* who were baptized could say, "God has given us the sign that we are his children," *all* who were baptized could say, "God has given us the sign that we are his children." And if they believed that, they would soon find what enemies they had who were trying to hinder them from acting as if they were his children. They would soon find that they had a flesh in them that was leading them to think all manner of wrong things, and to do all manner of wrong things, And if they gave way to that flesh of theirs, it would be a very cruel

master to them, and would drive them very hard. What then? Were they not to count themselves God's children because this was so? That would be just as if any son or daughter on earth were to say, "I have no father or mother," because he had been rebellious against his father and mother, and had not chosen to do the things they commanded. That would be to shrink from confessing how much they had offended, and what a gracious, loving God they had grieved. That would be saying that he had changed because they had changed. That would be cutting themselves off from the only way of being set free from the evil and being made right. And St. Paul told them plainly that if they tried to keep God's law when they had ceased to believe in this covenant that he had made with them as his sons and daughters, they would not be able to keep it; they would fight against it; they would do the things which it told them not to do.

But he says in the Epistle we have read to-day, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

What does that mean, "Walk in the Spirit"? It means: Live as if this were true which I have told you, and as if you were God's children, and God were looking upon you as a Father, and as if he were wishing you to do right, and were helping you to do right, and were giving you his own good and right Spirit, that you might do right. And then you "shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." They will rise up in you; they will tell you that you must obey them. But you can say, "No, we are God's children; we will not yield to them. They may be very strong; but his Spirit is stronger, we will yield to that." For he goes on, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these two are contrary" to each other. He does not say that about other men more than about himself. He could tell other men that it was so with them, because he found out that it was so with him. It was a continued battle in him. He had something in him which was looking up, desiring what was good, and wanting to know what was good, and asking to be good. He

had something in him which was looking down, and wishing for things that were not good, and not caring to find out what was good and what was evil; and choosing to have its own way, and not to ask to be guided into the right way. It was so with St. Paul; he could confidently say to each of the Galatians, "It is so with you, and it is so with me." "And, therefore," he says, "we do not the things that we would." The bad man does not do all the bad things that he thinks of; there is a right spirit checking him. The good man does not do all the good things that he thinks of, there is a flesh checking him. "But yet," he says, "you may be led by the Spirit. The weakest of you may; those who feel yourselves weak, and desire to be led by such a gracious and loving Lord. And then you will not be under the law." *That* he says in answer to those people who told the Galatians that they must not think that God was their Father; that they must come under the law which God gave men before he sent his Son to claim them as his children. He reminds them always that that

is their state and their glory; they must not give that up if they wish to get the better of their bad inclinations. "You are led by the Spirit," he tells them, "because you are God's children; you are not servants, but sons, and, therefore, he sends his Spirit into your hearts, that you may say, Abba, Father!"

Then he goes on to tell them, in very plain language, what kind of things they would do if they were left to themselves and did just the things which their flesh stirred them up to do. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these — adultery, fornication, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelling, and such like." As much as to say — If you look at the world and see what things are going on in it, — how wives are separated from their husbands, how men and women live to ruin each other, how nations fight with each other, what strifes there are in neighborhoods and families, how men quarrel about the least things and the greatest, even about the religion which should unite them together, how thou-

sands and ten thousands become beasts instead of men through drunkenness, how they give themselves to revelling, and out of that comes hatred and often murder, — if you look at all these things, you will understand what there is working in us all, and what we should become if we were our own masters. And he says of these things, "I tell you now, as I told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." That is as much as to say, "I have not changed my mind in the least. I always said to you that these things are the curse and damnation of all people who give way to them. It does not signify who they are, whether they call themselves Christians or heathens, they who do such things choose the devil for their king, and ask him to rule over them." But then he goes on, "there are other works doing on this earth, thanks be to God its King. There is love in this world, there is joy in the earth, there is peace on the earth; you see parents who are caring about their children; you see men and women who are doing kind and gentle and good

acts; you see people in sickness and poverty who are full of faith and trust; you see people who are bearing injuries meekly; you see people who are restraining themselves when they are tempted to drunkenness."

Where do all these good fruits come from? They come, as I told you before, from the Spirit of God. They are the things which God himself is working in us to do. Well, if you believe that, you can take your choice. You may walk in the Spirit, and claim your place as God's children, as baptized men; or you may follow the flesh, and then you will always be ready for some of those dark and devilish works of which I spoke to you just now. If you take the first course, you will never find God's law against you; it will always be on your side. In you will be crucified, in Christ's name and in his strength, those things which God hates and which make men miserable.

Now, brethren, remember that all this is spoken to us. Just as St. Paul and the Galatians had this flesh and this Spirit fighting in them, so have you and I. Just as the flesh

was drawing them down to low, vile things, to those things that ruin the body and soul, and set us at war with each other, so it is with you and me. We are not different, so far, from other men. Christians have not a whit better natures than Jews or heathen. Oftentimes they seem to be much worse; oftentimes Jews and heathen do good things which should make us ashamed. And why is this? If we believed in baptism we should have obeyed its teaching. We should know that all the good which is in them would come from God's dear and loving Spirit; that whatever kindness, gentleness, truth, there is in any, comes from the goodness and gentleness and truth of God. And then we should say, "O God! thou hast made us thy children: thou hast told us thou art our Father in Christ Jesus our Lord. Hold us fast to thee. Fulfil thy promise of writing thy law in our hearts by the Spirit. Never let us go out of this bond. Our godfathers and godmothers renounced for us the service of the world and the flesh and the devil. They said they were not our masters and should not be

our masters. Help us to say the same every day and every hour. Help us to fight the good fight of faith. For it is only by faith in thee that we can do anything that is right, or avoid anything that is wrong; only while we believe that thou art altogether good, and that thou art our Father, and that thou hast delivered us from our sins, and that thou art always on our side; it is only then we put to death our lusts and our hatred and our revelling; only then we can be meek and gentle and brave and true, as thou hast made us to be."

VII.

GOD AND MAMMON.

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. — ST. MATT. vi. 24.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ knew what was in man. He knew what the people in Judea were thinking and were trying to do eighteen hundred and sixty years ago. He knew what the people in England would be thinking and trying to do in our day. The people of Judea professed to worship one God — the Lord God of their fathers; the Lord God who had delivered their fathers out of bondage, who had given them bread and water as they came through the wilderness; who had promised them a good land in which they should dwell; who had been with them and with their seed after them. That was the God to whom the temple was built. That was the God to whom

the priests offered sacrifices. But when they were not in the temple they were about their farms and their merchandise. It was their duty to be about their farms and their merchandise. They were set in the world to till the land. The sea was given them that they might send their ships across it, and might send their good things to other lands, and receive the good things of those lands in exchange. God had appointed the sea and the land; God had set them their work to do. How cheerfully they would have done these works if they had believed that! With what glad hearts they would have risen in the morning if they had been sure that the good God, their deliverer and their friend, was rousing them to their day's labor, and would be with them all through it! How pleasantly they would have laid themselves down at night if they had remembered that he who never slumbers nor sleeps was watching over them while they slept! How comfortable it would have been to remember all the day, "He is our God and our neighbors' God. He helps

them to work as he helps us; he cares for them as he cares for us."

But it was not so. These Jews, when they were at their farms and their merchandise, did not remember the God whom they had worshipped in the temple. They thought chiefly of what they were to get by their labor; how much money would come of it. Each thought, "How much more money can I get than my neighbor? How can I hinder him from having the profits that I want for myself?" What came of that? Were they without a God, while they were thinking and plotting this way? No, my friends; men cannot shake off the thought of *some* God, try as hard as they will. They may forget the good God, the true God, the Maker of heaven and earth —their deliverer and friend. But then they will make to themselves a god; they will make him out of their own hard, cruel fancies; they will make him like themselves. So it was with the Jews. They loved money, and money became their god. They did not know it; they would not have confessed it —

but so it was. And a very hard, savage god it was which they set up for themselves. Not a helper, not a deliverer at all — but a bitter tyrant; not one who cared for all, but one who set up this man and scorned that; not a god who made the people better that served him, but one who made them meaner and baser. This is the god whom our Lord calls mammon — a false god, a god that men had formed for themselves, but all the worse and more mischievous for that.

Now, what our Lord tells the Jews here is, that they could not have these two gods — the gracious, loving God of their fathers; the God who sets captives free; who gives liberally to all; who seeks the good of all — and this selfish, hard-hearted mammon-god — "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." If you will love mammon, you will hate the good God; if you hold to God, you will despise mammon. You cannot worship one god on the Sabbath days, and the other through the week; you must have the same on the Sabbath days and in the week. If you worship mammon in the

week, it will be to him you bring your prayers and offerings on the Sabbaths. You will each come to get him to do something for you, not for your neighbors; you will each of you come to persuade him not to be your enemy. And again, if you worship the true, living God on the Sabbath days, you will have him with you on all other days.

So he goes on, "Therefore, I say unto you, take no thought for your life what ye shall eat, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on." How is that? Did he mean that his disciples were to be idlers; that they were to trust in God to give them food for their bodies, and clothing for their bodies, without working for it? No, my friends; his disciples were to be hard workers; they were to hate begging. St. Paul said to some of those who had got this notion into their heads of being idle and trusting God, "Those of you that will not work shall not eat." But our Lord knew that it does not make men work better to be anxious and miserable about what should come of their work. He knew that makes bad workers; he

knew that turned workers into beggars. They despised getting food and clothing by the labor of their hands, so they ruined themselves and their children by telling stories and asking other people for food or money. So he says, "Do not you act so. Believe you have not a cruel, hard mammon-god over you, but a gracious, loving, tender Father, the very same that you pray to in the temple. And, therefore, do not be anxious about what shall come of your labor; trust that to him. Does he not give you life every day, and is not that more than the meat by which you support life? Did he not give you these curious, wonderful bodies of yours? And is not that more than the dress that you put on your bodies? "Look," he says, "at these birds that are flying about in the air; does your Father in heaven let them starve? Does not he find food for them? And do not you think that you men whom he has made in his own likeness, whom he so loves that he has sent his Son to take your flesh upon him, do not you think that you are better than the birds?

Suppose you were ever so anxious to be tall men; could you become tall men by being anxious about it? Would that add one inch to your stature? So you see it must be God who is providing for you every minute, every hour. It must be he who is causing your babies to grow. It must be he who is giving you all that you want. Cannot you trust him?"

And then about your dress. Look at the flowers that grow about the fields and the hedgerows. Do you think any king had ever such beautiful raiment as these have? Do not you know that all the kings of the earth can do is to imitate the beauty of these flowers; to get some robes that look a little like them? And yet these flowers in the fields will be soon mown down. You cast them away; you count them for nothing. Well, do you not think that the God who thinks of these will think of you? Oh, ye of little faith!

"Therefore," he says, "do not be anxious and miserable about what you shall eat and what you shall drink. It is all very well for the heathen to do so, for they do not know

that they have a Father. They fancy their gods have a grudge against them, and want them to buy their favor with a great many gifts. But you are told that you have a Father who knows just what you want, just what strength you require for each day. Be remembering him. Say to yourselves, 'He is the King of all the earth, and we are his own children.' He wants us to be right, good children. Let us ask him to make us so; right in all our acts; right in all our thoughts; and then He will take care to send us whatever besides he knows is good for us."

"Take, therefore," he says, "no thought for the morrow;" that is, do not be fidgety and restless about what shall come to-morrow. You have enough to do each day; enough of evil to bear each day. You need not make yourselves so many trials by fancying what you may have another day. Let that alone; only trust God, the good God who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. And so you will have the true life, the life which will not pass away for ever and ever.

Now, my friends, I said when I began that our Lord Jesus Christ knew what the Jews were tempted to think and to do at that time; and that he knew what we should be tempted to think and to do at this time. Our temptation is the same as theirs was, the very same. We come here to church on Sunday. We call God our almighty and most merciful Father. We say that we believe he gave his only begotten Son for us all, to die for us, and that he ever lives for us at his Father's right hand. We say that we believe he so cared for us as to send his own holy and loving Spirit to dwell with us, that he might teach us the things we want to know, and help us to do the things we want to do. That is our Sunday doctrine. Then we go out to our different works during the week; and we forget that the God we have heard of in church is the God who rules over our houses and our fields; who gives us children; who enables us to work; who supports our lives. A man who has money thinks, "How can I get a little more of this, and a little more

still, and a little more still?" A poor man thinks, "How can I keep myself from starving? for surely all things are against me; the Ruler of the world is against me." And so, brethren, all of us come by one way or other to get these thoughts into our hearts, — that mammon, the money-god, is somehow our master; that he has the upper hand; that our main business is to serve him. I say we are all tempted to this faith. I know that I am. And I know that if I am tempted to it in the week, I must be tempted to it on Sundays. I cannot have two gods — one for the world, and one for the church. I shall have mammon in both if I have him in either. And I know not, brethren, how we should escape having him in both, if it were not for these dear words of our Lord Christ, and for the dear acts which he has done to make them good. I know we should set up a tyrant and worship him, even the cruel, brutal tyrant — this money-god — if he had not come down from heaven to show us what our Father is, and how he cares for us, and seeks after us; if he had not become

a poor man, and had not died upon the cross and risen again and ascended on high. All this bears witness to every clergyman and to every one of his hearers, to every rich man and to every poor man, that there is a Father over all, upon whom they may all depend in all times of their tribulation, and in all times of their wealth, and in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment; One to whom they may give up themselves and their children, their bodies and their souls, as to a faithful and loving Creator who has so loved them that he gave up his own Son for them all. Yes, verily, brethren, and it is not I only who preach to you of this Father. The birds of the air preach of him, the flowers of the field preach of him; all these say, "The mammon-god did not create us; the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ created us. His love has called us into existence. His love watches over the life of every man and woman and child."

Therefore, do you men and women and children trust in him, and give your hearts to him, and ask him to make you right and true, and to make you love each other as he loves you.

And ask him to deliver you from the worship of the mammon-god; for in very deed he is the false evil spirit, the devil who is seeking to destroy those bodies and souls in hell which the Son of God died to save, and to make heirs of Eternal Life.

VIII.

LIFE AND RAIMENT.

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? —St. Matt. vi. 25.

Our Lord spoke these words to his disciples who were poor men, men that had to work for their livelihood. Do you think he told them that they need not work, that they might fold their hands and go to sleep, that God would take care of them if they did? Do you think he meant to say, "You need not provide for your children; may spend what you have got, just as you like"? No, my friends, he meant nothing of this kind. He wished these poor people to work more diligently than before. He wished them to be less hindered in their work. He wished them to think more of their children than they had ever thought; to be wise men and

not spendthrifts. Let us consider what he had said just before. He spoke of their food and their clothing, their lives and their bodies — you heard me read it a few moments ago.

"Ye cannot," he said, "serve two masters;" that is, two masters of opposite minds, two masters that bid you do different things. And he tells them who the two masters are that had two opposite minds, and would bid them to do different things. "You cannot serve God and mammon."

He had been declaring to them the great message, "God is your Father." When you pray to him, say, "Our Father which art in Heaven."

He said they must trust him for all that they wanted. They might ask day by day for their daily bread. They might ask him to forgive them their sins. They might ask him not to lead them into temptation. They might ask him to deliver them from evil. He was willing to do all these things for them; they should not doubt or fear that he was.

And what made them doubt or fear that

he would do these things? They did not really believe him to be their Father. They did not give him credit for feeling to them as a Father feels to his children. They thought he had a grudge against them. How came they to have such a notion? Because they were in their hearts worshipping Mammon; that is to say, a covetous god — a god who wants things for himself, a god who seeks to get and not to give. What made them dream of such a god as that and worship him? They dreamt of him because he was like themselves; they were covetous; they wanted to get and not to give. So they made a god who was such a one as they were. They might make no image nor picture of him; but they worshipped him in their hearts all the same.

Now, our Lord said, "This you cannot do if you worship your Father in heaven. You cannot have both these gods for your masters. You will hate one if you love the other; if you will hold to the one you will despise the other. You will hate the covetous god if you love the

good and gracious Father. If you will hold to the covetous god you will despise the true God."

But what is it to serve the covetous god? It is this. If I am fretful and anxious about what I shall eat and drink, and how I shall be clothed, I fancy that I am his subject. I act as if he, this grudging, covetous god, were my master. And what is it to serve the Father in heaven? If I work without fear or anxiety, believing that there is One over me who knows what I am doing, and takes an interest in it, and desires that my work should be healthy and profitable, then I am serving my Father in heaven; then I am acting as if he were my Master.

Now, you all know very well that men do not work better for being fretful and anxious; they work much worse; after a time they are not able to work at all. Then, instead of being more decently clothed, they become ragged; instead of having more tidy houses, and more wholesome food, the houses become dirty and the food bad; instead of providing more for

their children, their children starve. Our Lord wished to save his disciples from this. He wishes to save us from this. And so he says to them and to us, "Remember who your true Master is. Let no one persuade you that you have any other than my Father in heaven; than him who sent me on earth to deliver you from all bad gods; than him of whom I — who go about doing good — am the perfect likeness; than him whose will is at all times and in all places to do you good." Assure yourselves every morning when you wake, "He and he only is my Master." Say to yourselves, "We will not have the covetous god for our Lord. This is our Lord. He will be our Lord for ever and ever. He is our children's Lord. He will be their Lord for ever and ever.

That is the purpose of all our Lord's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, of which you have heard a part to-day. He made known to his disciples, he makes known to us, what he is who created us, what he is who governs us. They were apt to say, and we are apt to say, "Oh, no, that cannot be our Master. That is

too good news to be true. It cannot be that we have actually, at all times, a Father in heaven who does not forget us, who never becomes indifferent to us, who never ceases to desire our good, and to contrive good for us." And our Lord answers, "Yes, but it *is* true, wonderful as it is ; true to the very letter, more true than words can tell you, or than you can imagine." But then you may say, "Yes, perhaps he cares about great things, but not about little. He may care that we should be wise and good, but he will not care whether we have food and raiment." He does care, no doubt, first of all, that you should be wise and good. Doubt not that he does. And doubt not that he will enable you to be what he wishes you to be. Ask for that and you will have it ; seek and you will find it. "But why," says our Lord, "should you fancy that he does not care about your food ? Look at these birds that are flying in the air. Could they get food if he did not provide them food ? if he did not give them power to seek the food, and did not make them fit to receive the food ? Why should you

fancy he does not care about your clothing? Look at these lilies in the gardens, or at any of the flowers in the hedgerows. Would they, any of them, have their beautiful clothing — so much more beautiful than any that man ever weaves, or than any king has ever worn — if he did not clothe them? See what care he takes of the commonest of his creatures. And do you think he does not care more for men, whom he has formed in his own likeness, whom he has sent his own Son to claim as his brethren?"

That will explain why he bids you take no thought for your life. If we are fidgety and restless about it, we shall do ourselves no good. But if we trust it with God, then we shall go manfully forth to do all that we have to do, knowing that we are safe in his hand. Then we shall say to ourselves, "Well, he has given us this wonderful life within us. How much more that is than the food which nourishes it! But since our life wants food to support it, he will surely let us have that. He will give us strength to labor for it, which is better than if it dropped into our mouths. He has given us

these curious bodies; how much more curious they are than the very finest clothes we can put on them! But since they want clothing, he will enable us to obtain that. He has greater designs for us than for the birds and the lilies, so he will not treat us as he treats them; he will treat us more generously, more considerately. He will call out a faith and hope and love in us all which they cannot have. He will bring us often in what seem very hard ways, by great sorrows, to this trust and hope and love. It is worth while. We shall find it so at last. The clothes and food will have done their work and will perish. The faith and hope and love will abide forever. They will bind us to those that have gone before us, and to those that shall come after us. They will bind us to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to God our Father through all ages." And it is, my friends, that God who invites us this day to eat of that food which sustains our spirits. He wants them to live and not die. He wants them to believe him and trust him and love him. And thus he enables them to do it. He says, "I have given

my Son to suffer and die for you all, for the whole world. Remember that love of mine, that love which he showed forth in his death." Feed upon that in your hearts. There is nothing like it. Angels and archangels feed upon it. Poor men and women may feed upon it with them. It will never wear out. And you need not take thought or be anxious about this food more than the other. We cannot earn it. God gives it. He sends you this simplest sign and token how real it is, and that he would have all partake of it together. He bestows it freely; we receive when we give him thanks for it.

IX.

THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT.

Brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. — Rom. viii. 12–17.

St. Paul is telling us here that there are two masters, either of whom we may serve, but one or other of whom we must serve. Christ is one, sin is the other. Christ is the Lord of our spirits. If we claim him for our Lord and serve him, then we must live as if we were spiritual beings, trusting, hoping, loving, holding our bodies in subjection. If we serve sin, then the body becomes the master and the spirit dies; we eat and drink and sleep; faith, hope, and love perish. "But," says St. Paul, "it need

not be so with any of us. Christ the Lord of our spirits saw that the spirits of men were dead within them, that they were living as mere fleshly creatures; and he came down and lived on this earth, and died on it, that he might deliver these spirits out of death, and bind them to him." "Now," adds St. Paul, if we do believe this, and do verily claim Christ for our dead and risen Lord, "then we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh;" that is to say, we are debtors, but this flesh, this evil nature of ours, is not our creditor, we owe it no service, we are not bound to please it and follow its will; it is not our Lord, it is our slave. But we are debtors still; we are debtors to him who has redeemed us and made us one with him; we owe to him the free service of the spirit, the service of trust and hope and love. And this is a debt which we shall go on owing and paying through eternity, and which we shall always love to owe and be able to pay, because there will be always fresh love to call forth ours, and to bind us closer to him. This is what St. Paul means by the first words of my

text. Now let us consider them a little more particularly, and also those which follow them.

You see, St. Paul declares that there is a spirit within every one of you. You would all have known this if he had not told you, at least, you would have known it in a certain way; you would not have had a happy, comfortable knowledge of it, but you would have had a restless, painful feeling of it. All men have had this; you and I have had it. Every poor savage on the earth who had never heard of a soul, or of Christ, has strange thoughts within him; he cannot tell whence they have come or whither they are going. He sets out with his bow and arrows to get himself food, and he thinks this is his business. But while he is out on his hunt, wonderful feelings come upon him; some of them are feelings of anger and revenge against men whom he thinks have injured him; some of them are stranger still, as if he heard one speaking to him and telling him, "That is wrong, you ought not to have those feelings of revenge, those men are your kinsfolk and brethren;" sometimes they are feelings of kindness

and affection towards those who are of his own flesh and blood, or have done him a kindness. And then, along with all these, are thoughts of some great spirit who must have sent him these thoughts, and these reproofs, and these feelings of affection, but whether he sent this revenge into him also, or not, the poor man cannot tell; oftentimes he thinks Yes, but when he is happiest he says No, it cannot be. All this goes on in the poor savage; and therefore whatever he may fancy about himself, or other people may fancy about him, he is not sent into the world mainly to hunt for food, or to cook it, or to eat it. There is a spirit in him; and he wants some one to meet that spirit, and speak to it, and tell him what it is, and what is to become of it. And what was in this man, I say, has been in you, and in me. Yes, and those things which we have in common with the savage do more concern us than many of the things in which we boast of differing from him. He may never have seen a city, and we may have lived all our lives in one; he may know a very few things, and we may have heard about a great many.

But, depend upon it, these questionings in his heart are more to him than all these things would be if they were given him at once; and if we understand the matter rightly, they are more to us. These thoughts that stir within us, these feelings and cravings and wants which all these things that we see and hear do not satisfy — these are worth all the world to us, if we only know what to do with them, if we only know to whom we can carry them. I do not say they make us happy; they do no such thing; they have made you very restless and unhappy, and you know it. But yet they are the way to happiness, and the man who is without them never can be happy. A hog may be a happy creature; but a man who makes himself a hog never can be, for he was not meant to be this, but something else.

You see, then, what I mean when I tell you that there is a spirit in each of us, and that we should all have felt this to be so in some way or other, even if the Scripture had not told us about it. The Scripture is not sent to tell us this; but it is sent to tell us

who is looking after these spirits, and what he has done for them, what he is doing, what he means to do for them. It is sent to tell us how these spirits may be free instead of being in bondage, how they may live instead of dying, how they may be at peace instead of being at war.

This is what St. Paul is speaking of. "We are debtors," he says, "not to the flesh to live after the flesh." We are not bound to live as if eating and drinking and sleeping and getting money were the business of our lives; for if we do this we shall die. That spirit within us which is longing and striving and hoping, which wants an immortal Being to sympathize with it, this will die within us; every day will make its struggles for freedom weaker; every day will put heavier chains upon it; every day will make it more degraded and wretched, till at last it will die; that which was the life of it will go away, its hope will go, its love will go, and yet it will last on in this state of death, and when the body leaves it, that will not end

its misery; its death will continue, a death that is felt and known by it, though it can feel and know nothing else. It will feel that it has not peace, or joy, or God, and that it was meant to have them, and that it has lost them. Brethren, this death is going on around us at every moment; God grant that it may not be going on within any of us. You see the breath leaving men's bodies continually; you see them carried out before your eyes; it is a mournful sight; but still, if that be all, the end of so much suffering is surely blessed rather than grievous. But, oh! do you not see men dying about you in another way? Do you not see sinful habits and inclinations extinguishing the life of their spirits, destroying the affections and good desires and longings after God that were once in them? Do you not see this death and unbelief in all good things creeping over men's spirits? Do you not see a subtle poison getting deeper and deeper into their hearts, and at first making a fever there, then leaving all bitterly cold? I said,

do you not see it? I should have said, have you not felt it? Do we not know that such changes as these, worse, ten thousand times worse, than a change from the most perfect health to the most miserable sickness of the body, have gone on within us? Have we not known what it is to have life dying, and death living in our hearts?

And if so, my brethren, where was the help? what was the end of it? This is what the Scripture is written to tell us, this is what St. Paul is preaching to us here. He says this death need not come over you; it need never have overtaken you; and yet in the very jaws of it there is still a Deliverer. He into whose name you are baptized, of whose death you are made partakers; he who died that your sin might die, who rose that your spirits might rise and live — he is still with you, the Lord of your spirits, still unchanged and unchangeable. Believing in him, claiming that right in him which he gave you in baptism, and which he has never withdrawn from you since, claiming

your union with him who has died unto sin once, but who now dieth no more, for death hath no more dominion over him, your spirits may shake themselves free from this oppressor who is holding them down. Death shall have no dominion over them, as it hath no dominion over him; sin shall not be their master, as it is not his. With your spirits you can trust in him, with your spirits you can hope in him, with your spirits you can rise up with him, and ascend with him, and reign with him. And, then, if they have tasted this liberty, they would wish to enjoy it continually; and that they may do so, they will desire to mortify the deeds of the body, which has kept them from enjoying it, and would keep them from enjoying it still. They will desire to give up their spirits to be ruled by his Spirit, to be filled by him with all holy desires and good thoughts, and prompted to all just works.

Feeling themselves to be spiritual beings, they will feel that they want this mightier Spirit to guide them continually, to teach them

how to know themselves, and know their brethren, and know God. They will feel that they need him to dwell with them continually, wherever they are, whatever they are doing. They will feel, therefore, that they need that he should be renewed in them day by day, and they feel that they may ask for this renewal, because, being led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God, and because Christ has said, "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, shall not your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Now, the nature of this Spirit, and his effect upon us, St. Paul describes in these words: "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." When you first felt that you had spirits, and you did not know what they were, or how you came by them, a strange fear took hold of you. You felt as if you were very wonderful beings, and yet it seemed very terrible to be so wonderful; you wished you could be like the other crea-

tures, without any such spirits. Then, after this, you find that these spirits are in bondage. They want to be free, but they are not; they want to be thinking and hoping and loving, but they cannot. They have fallen under some power which hinders them from doing what they would. You begin to ask, What brought us into this bondage? and the answer which comes is, Sin brought us into this bondage. We have lived separate from God, and therefore have we fallen into it. But this answer very much increases our fear, and that fear itself becomes a new and a most terrible bondage. You see then what St. Paul means when he speaks of a spirit of bondage again unto fear. And what is to banish this spirit from us? Nothing can but believing that the God from whom we have revolted, against whom we have sinned, has himself sent to claim these spirits for his children, to take them out of their bondage, to make them free and happy again. This is the good news which your baptism preaches to you, and which we on the warrant of your baptism declare to you, — that

God has adopted you to be his children, that he has sent his Son to bring you into his family, and that, therefore, through Christ, you may call him Abba, Father. And it is while you are calling him so, and feeling to him as a Father, that his Spirit beareth witness with your spirit that you are the sons of God.

If you live away from your Father's house, you shall never know that he is your Father. If you come to him and draw nigh to him as a Father, you shall feel that he is one. So that this spirit is given to us that we may be able to pray to him, saying, Our Father, and to trust in him as a Father; and while we do this we know that we have his Spirit. You must not wait to pray to him till you think that you have this Spirit to pray with. You must believe that you have it, and pray because you believe so, and then you shall know that you have it. Believe that you are not debtors to the flesh, to live after that flesh, but that you are united to Christ, and bondsmen and debtors to him; and act as if it was so, thanking him for having redeemed you and blessed you, and then you

shall rise above the flesh, and be able to mortify the deeds of it, and be able to trust in him. Do not say, I will crush my evil inclinations and desires when I have something better in me than them. But be assured that there is something better in you, and lay hold earnestly of that with your heart's desire, and then in God's strength cut off every right hand and pluck out every right eye which hinders you from possessing it. Do not say, If we are God's children we will call upon him, but say, We are, and therefore will we call upon him.

And do not stop even here. St. Paul says, If we are children, then are we heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. What does this mean, brethren? If you think that I cannot tell you, and you may well think this, come to that altar, and let God tell you what it means. This mystery of being heirs of God, of entering into his love and joy, this mystery of being joint heirs with Christ, of being partakers with him in his life and his death, is the mystery of that holy sacrament to which I have just invited you. It is a mystery which angels

may desire to look into, and into which they can see but a very little way; and yet it is a mystery in which every poor, suffering child of Adam is besought and conjured by God himself to be a sharer.

All that I have been saying to you this morning; all that I have ever said to you about life and death, the flesh and the spirit, Christ and sin; about that Spirit which is given to us, that we may be the sons of God; about the blessedness of calling him Father — all this is contained in that holy feast. I speak it to you in words here, God speaks it to you in deed there. It is not a vain thing; it is your life. It is offered not to others, but to you, to you who are here this day. A suffering Lord and Master presents to you, suffering men, the pledges of his having been one with you, one in your sorrows, one in your death. He gives you these tokens that you belong to him, that he has purchased you, and redeemed you of old, and that he is now bearing you in his bosom, and if you will submit to him will carry you home to his fold. Then you will know what

indeed it is to be heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; what it is to see him who was the Lamb slain upon earth, surrounded by his saints in heaven, and sitting down to the marriage feast with those whom he has brought out of much tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in his blood.

But you may know something of it now, you may be joint heirs with him now. He is seeking to make you so by making you partakers of his sufferings. Oh! understand his gracious and loving purpose. Receive this second token of your sonship; this baptism of fire by which he confirms and makes effectual his baptism of water, and to which also he adds the seal of his Holy Spirit. Receive it as his own call to you to take up the privileges of children, to come to him in faith as those who know that they are not debtors to the flesh to live after the flesh, but to the Spirit to live after the Spirit, as those who believe his own sure word, that if they suffer with him, committing the keeping of their souls to him as to a faithful Creator, they shall live and reign with him forever.

X.

MINISTERS OF CHRIST.

And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. — St. Luke xxii. 24.

This is St. Bartholomew's Day. We do not know much about St. Bartholomew. Some have thought that he was the same with that Nathanael of whom our Lord said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" If he was that Nathanael, we ought indeed to remember him. For if he who knows the heart testifies of a man that he is without guile, he is clear and honest, he hates his own falsehood, and cleaves to the God of Truth, that is one to be reverenced above almost any. But we cannot be sure that Bartholomew was the same as Nathanael. All we can tell certainly about him is that he was one of the twelve apostles. So the passage I

have read you from the Gospel does not mean Nathanael, or any one more especially; but it has to do with all the apostles; and because it has to do with them, it has to do with us.

You might fancy that on a day like this, which is called after one of these apostles, we should hear something very good of them. It is not so; we hear something that is bad of them. They were met at the last Supper they were ever to have with their Lord upon earth; that very night he was to be betrayed, and seized, and taken from them. They did not know what was coming upon them, but they knew that something was coming. He had said that he had a great desire to eat that passover with them before he suffered. What, then, were they doing at this time? Were they listening quietly to all the words that fell from his lips? Were they asking him to tell them what was at hand, and to prepare them for it? No! "There was a strife among them which should be accounted the greatest." They had had such strifes before. Jesus had rebuked them once by

setting a little child among them, and saying that he who was most like that child would be greatest in his kingdom. But the wish in each of them to be higher than the others was so strong that it burst out again. Just when it seemed most utterly out of place it burst out. They were eating of the same bread, and drinking the same wine; and they had one Master among them who had guided them all, taught them all, and to whom they all looked up; yet there was this strife among them, which of them should be greatest.

Perhaps it was not so strange as it might seem that they should be thinking of their own greatness, for our Lord had spoken to them of a kingdom which he had come to establish; he had chosen them out of all their countrymen to be with him. He had lately entered into the city of Jerusalem, the chief city of the land, and the people had brought branches of palm-trees, and had strewed them before him, and had hailed him as the heir of the throne of David, the great King of the Jews. So, in spite of the sorrow that seemed to be op-

pressing him, and in spite of what he told them about his sufferings, they thought he must be going to reign gloriously; and if he did, then was it wonderful that they should be thinking, "And which of us shall be nearest to him; which of us shall have the highest honor in that kingdom of his"?

Our Lord knew this was what they were thinking of, and therefore he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors." That is as if he had said, "It is very true that in the kingdoms of the different nations of the earth people try to get the highest places; often they do it with a right purpose. When they are exalted above their neighbors, they fancy they can do them good. And so the name which these rulers go by is benefactors, or doers of good."

"But ye," he goes on, "but ye shall not be so." What! not doers of good? not benefactors? Can he mean that? No; but he is going to tell them how they may do good. It

would not be by being raised above other men, by being in high places; "but he that is greatest among you let him be as the younger, and he that is chief as he that doth serve."

Now, you see our Lord does not tell the apostles that they were mistaken in supposing that he had come to set up a kingdom over men. If he had, he would have contradicted all that he had been preaching, and all that he had sent them to preach up to that time; for he had preached saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" very near you; and he had sent them with the same message; and he did not tell them that they were wrong in supposing that his kingdom was about to be proclaimed very soon indeed, in spite of all the suffering he had to go through; and he did not tell them that they were wrong in supposing that they were to be sharers in his kingdom, and that they were to help in making men subjects of it. But this is what he said, "If you would be what you wish to be, high men, chief men in this kingdom of mine, then you must be

servants — servants not only of me, but servants of all people among whom you go. So, instead of quarrelling and disputing which of you shall be most above his fellows, let this be your desire, 'Lord, teach me how I may be most a servant; tell me what persons thou wouldst have me wait upon.'"

"For whether is greater," he goes on, "he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? But I have been among you as he that serveth." "You reckon that the master who sits at the table is more than the servant who hands him his food; but I, who am the Lord of all, have waited upon you; I have washed your feet; I have been in all ways working for you, doing the things for you that you could not do for yourselves. All my life has been a service. Remember that, and then consider whether you wish to be like me or unlike me; whether you wish to exercise the kind of power I have exercised, or some other kind of power. Because, if you wish to be like me, you must be ministers or servants; if you wish to exercise the kind of power I have exercised, you must

stoop and not rise; you must be more lowly, and not more lifted up."

Then he went on, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations." "You say I have called you and chosen you out of the rest of your countrymen, though you were but poor fishermen. Yes, truly, that is so. I have allowed you to be with me in the trials and temptations I have been passing through. They have been very sore. All manner of people — my own subjects — have been contending with me, priests and rulers and lawyers. Nay, even one of you is to betray me; and the devil has been contending with me, trying to separate me from my Father. Yet you have seen that my Father has enabled me to heal sicknesses and cast out devils. I have been ruling in the midst of my temptations; I have been delivering other men from their troubles, whilst I have had harder troubles to go through than any of them."

"And I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me." "I am not going to cheat you or disappoint you; you are

to have places in my kingdom; you are to sit with me on my throne. But then see what a kingdom it is! See what the King of it has had to bear, and has still to bear! See to what depths he has sunk and will sink! Remember, if I appoint you a kingdom as my Father has appointed me, I appoint you suffering as my Father hath appointed me. If I appoint you to rule over men, and to set them free from their bondage to death and the evil spirit, as my Father hath appointed me, I appoint you to be tried and tempted as my Father hath appointed me."

And so it will come to pass that you "shall eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

What does this mean, "You shall eat and drink at my table"? They were eating and drinking then with him at the passover, the Jewish feast. And whilst they were eating he took bread and blessed it, and said, "Take, eat, this is my body;" and then after supper he took the cup and drank, and gave it to

them, and said, "This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins." Now, as often as the apostles ate that bread and drank that cup, according to the Lord's commandment, in remembrance of him, they sat at his table, and ate and drank with him. That was the sign and pledge that they were one with him, though he was gone out of their sight! that was the sign that they were one with all his saints in heaven and earth. And they were never to forget that they were one with him, and one with all his saints in heaven and earth; one with him in his sorrow, and in his temptation, and his death; one with him in the glory that he had with his Father; one with all suffering people on earth; one with all that have passed out of the earth, and are with him where he is. This was to eat of his table in his kingdom.

And what was it to "sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel"? The tribes of Israel were called out of all the families of the earth, that they might be a blessing to the fam-

ilies of the earth; that they might tell all the families of the earth of God's truth and God's love.

Now, these twelve apostles, these poor fishermen, did go about as Christ's ministers, blessing all the families of the earth, telling them how God had sent his Son to redeem them, and his Spirit to bind them into one; so they judged the twelve tribes of Israel, who had failed to do their work, who had refused to bless men, who thought they were to live to please themselves. The twelve tribes of Israel lost their land and their city. But these apostles who did their work still kept alive the remembrance of them; still bore witness of what they might have been; still showed that God would fulfil his purpose, however disobedient his servants might be. And now, then, my friends, we have seen ourselves in these apostles. They were men not richer or more learned than any who work in our towns or villages. They were men of like passions as we are, men who were easily puffed up with vanity, each of whom thought it would be very

pleasant to exalt himself over the rest. But Christ, the Son of God, took them under his guidance. He said that they were to be ministers of his kingdom, and that in that kingdom he who was the chief of all was the servant of all. Let us understand, then, my friends, that every one of us is a servant or minister in this kingdom. Some of us have the name of ministers. That is not that we may be separate from our fellows, but that we may give them a sign what Christ would have them be. *All* of us are ministers. Every father is a minister of Christ to his children. Every mother is a minister of Christ to her children. Every brother and sister is a minister of Christ to his brothers and sisters. Wherever we are going, whatever we are doing, in a house or in a field, we are ministers of Christ. That is our calling. We may be faithful or unfaithful ministers; but he is our Master, and he has sent us to wait upon some or other, upon more or fewer. And we must ask him to teach us how to wait on them. What a wonder it is to think that he, the Lord of heaven and earth, was the great

Minister; that he came down from heaven, not to get the service of men, but to serve them. So he proved himself to be the King. He stooped more than all, so they felt and knew that he was higher than all. And for you, brethren, as much as for them, he stooped. For you, as much as for them, he took on him the form of a servant. You, as much as them, he would have to sit at his table in his kingdom. You, as much as them, he would have sharers of his throne, by helping them whom now, as much as ever, he cares for.

You need not strive which of you shall be the greatest. Ask him to make you lowly and meek, and ready to help others; that was *his* greatness, and you would not wish to be different from him.

And one thing more I must say. The apostles were to judge the twelve tribes of Israel; but the twelve tribes of Israel, those poor Jews who were cast out of their city because they did not care to serve their brethren, will judge us, if we, who call Jesus our Lord, do not like to be what he was and to do as he

did. They refused him, and put him to death, not knowing what they did. We know far better. And we refuse him as our King; we act as if he had never come down to save us and bring us into his kingdom, if we are not willing to serve our brethren for his sake.

XI.

THE RACE AND THE PRIZE.

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. — 1 Cor. ix. 24–27.

Very near the city of Corinth, where the people lived to whom this letter of St. Paul's was written, certain games were celebrated every three or every five years. These games were of various kinds; some were of leaping, some of wrestling, some of throwing quoits, some of darting, and some of running. They were very famous games; and they were held on a neck of land which joined the two parts of the country of Greece together, so that people came in great numbers from both sides of it to see them. We may fancy they were going on

at the very time this letter was written, so that those who read it would have seen some of these exercises, or at all events would have heard much talk of them. Indeed, all their lives long they had heard talk of them. When children they were told what a great thing it was to win a prize in these games, though the prize itself was but a branch of a pine-tree; and what famous songs had been written about the persons who had got these prizes, and what pains men took to prepare themselves for them. They knew especially that those men who sought for the prize in the foot-race took wonderful care of themselves beforehand, eating very sparingly, and even putting their body to great suffering that they might be the lighter and freer to run.

I tell you these things that you may see how well the Corinthians would understand what St. Paul meant when he said, "Know ye not that they who run in a race run all, but one obtaineth the prize;" and "every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." They did know both

these facts. They were reminded of them every day, for they heard every day of some man who had been the winner, and of others who had been disappointed; and they knew it was not by accident, at least in general, that one got the crown, and the others lost it; that it was because one had been watchful and careful, and had kept the prize constantly in his mind, and lived as if that were the thing he was living for, and had not grudged trouble and suffering for the sake of it; the man who had kept under his body and brought it into subjection.

Now, says St. Paul, "They do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." He means to say, "We are running a race as well as they. It is a different kind of race in many respects, the rewards of it are different; but it is like in this; some will win the prize, and some will miss it; and those who miss it will miss it because they run uncertainly, or if they are fighting, fight as those who beat the air. Those who obtain it will obtain it because they keep

their end steadily in view, and go steadily and right on towards it, and are ready to give up and throw over everything that makes them less fit to run, and, therefore, less likely to reach the goal."

Let us try to consider all these points which St. Paul brings under our notice.

I. The prize, in the contest that St. Paul speaks of, is a different kind of prize from that which these Corinthians were seeking after in their games. I wish you to attend to me while I am speaking on this point, for men are apt to make great mistakes upon it, much greater than they fancy. When I say that the prize in the race St. Paul speaks of was not like the prize which men contended for in such races as these, I do not mean that they only contended for the branch of a pine-tree, and that we contend for much greater and higher prizes and rewards than that; I do not mean this. The little branch was not the thing they really contended for; they contended for the honor and esteem of their fellow-citizens; they contended to be

thought the greatest men in all the country round; to be praised and wondered at by all who saw them and all who heard of them. It was not a light thing, as men call lightness, which these racers sought after. The man who seeks to be wondered at because he is so rich, or because he is so learned, ay, or even because he is so kind and charitable — this man seeks just the same sort of reward that the runners and the wrestlers and the leapers and the throwers among the Corinthians coveted. It does not signify what the sign of people's approbation which they receive may be; it is this which they desire, it is for this they labor. Do not then account these runners very silly people for wasting such time and trouble in hopes of such a paltry reward. They were just as wise as any other men who are striving after the honor and esteem of their fellow-creatures. The means they took to get it were far more honorable than those which many take; and they were so far better than other men who have the same

ambition, that they were willing to receive a branch with a few withered leaves on it, as the only pledge and token of their labor and their glory.

St. Paul, then, means to take these runners at the Corinthian games as specimens of men who are striving after all the rewards which men of this world seek for, when he says, "They do it that they may obtain a corruptible crown, we an incorruptible;" he means to say, the poor faded leaves, for such, we are told, they were, which formed the garlands of these conquerors, are signs and specimens of the pride and wealth and glory for which men here are toiling, for which they are content to spend themselves by day and night, which through years of toil and suffering they are pressing after, and which at last only one here and there, out of a number of those who have desired them, ever obtains.

But what, then, was that prize which St. Paul said that *he* was struggling for, and which he bade these Corinthians struggle for, and of

which he said that, instead of being faded and withered, it would be ever green and fresh and new and flourishing throughout eternity? I know what you will say. You will say that this prize was the joys of heaven, while the other prize was the joys of earth. Yes, brethren, but what do you mean by the joy of heaven? Do you mean something that is like the beautiful pictures we sometimes see in our dreams? Something that sounds much more pleasant in words than the good things that men of the world rejoice in, but is less real and substantial than they are? If you mean this, you do not mean what St. Paul means. Or do you think that the joy of heaven is to be idle and free from pain, after the work and suffering of this world is over? If you mean this, you do not mean what St. Paul means. Or do you think that the joys of heaven consist in having all the good things that our eyes see, and that our ears hear, and that our hands handle, only in a much better and more perfect state than we have them here, and being able to feast upon them and enjoy them without

becoming tired and exhausted? If you mean this, you do not mean what St. Paul means. No, and you do not speak of the things that you want, or that any man wants. You do not speak of things that are worth living and dying for. You speak only of shadows and phantoms that are just as perishing as those leaves which the conquerors won at the foot-race.

St. Paul was a man who had as hard a fight to fight in this world as you have. Dreams would not have satisfied him any more than they would you; he wanted realities; he complained of the things men in general are seeking after, not because they are too substantial, but because they are not substantial enough, because there is no food in them to content the appetites of hungry men. And this was not because his heart was not formed like the hearts of other men, because he did not thirst for honor and approbation and love as they do. He did crave after all these things, and he believed that his heavenly Father had put that craving into his heart. But he felt, "These smiles which are so pleasant for an hour while

they are greeting me on my return from the race, or which reward me for being rich, or wise, or charitable, these will last but a little while, and I shall be left cold again. I want to live in the light of a countenance which never ceases to smile upon me; I want to behold one, and behold him constantly, who will not love me to-day and forget me to-morrow, but who will be the same at all seasons; who will be "the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." I want honor; but if I am merely honored for something that *I* do, for some labor that *I* undertake, I feel how poor and weak I am, how utterly undeserving of that perpetual honor which I desire, and without which I cannot be content. Oh, surely I must long to behold the honor and glory of another, to delight myself in *that*, to lose myself in *that*, to forget that I am anything, in my delight to see him exalted, to find all the blessedness I seek for, not in myself, but in him." Brethren, this was the prize St. Paul desired; he tells us so himself; he says, "I press to the mark of the prize of my high calling of God in Christ Jesus, that

I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God by faith."

He desired to know God. To know him in whom is all life and light and honor and glory; to dwell in the light of his countenance, whose name is love, who was love, is love, and shall be love for ever and ever. And desiring this, he did not desire a vain thing; he desired the most real of all things, he desired that which *is*, because *God is;* he desired that which the spirit of you, and of me, and of every man in this earth is desiring, and which we must have or perish discontented and miserable. And, he was desiring that which God hath promised to give, which he hath given us in his Son Jesus Christ, in whom dwelleth all his fulness, in whom all his love and his glory are manifested, and who is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." This was that incorruptible prize which he told the Corinthians so to "run that they might obtain."

II. I have shown you then how this race

differed from the race to which St. Paul compared it. Now I will show you wherein they were alike.

1. They are all alike in this, that the prize is set before all. All, he says, run; every one may be a candidate for the race who pleases; one as much as another may have the prize. It was as in these games near Corinth, every one who run knew that he might have the pine-branch. It is so in the contests of this world — any man may, if he will, set to work, and try to win the approbation and honor and wonder of his fellow-creatures. But it is the most true of all, with reference to that race for the incorruptible crown which St. Paul here speaks of. A lame man might have been allowed to run at Corinth; but he would have been a fool for his pains. The prize was there, but he must have known he could not win it. A poor man may try to make himself rich; here in England at least there will be no laws to prevent him from succeeding. But he starts at a great disadvantage. Other people who have money may make it more, but he who has not any-

thing to begin with will only now and then rise greatly in the world. But this prize of the "knowledge of God in Christ Jesus our Lord," this prize of durable riches and righteousness, is indeed proposed to all, and no one that hears of it need say, I have some disadvantage which makes it impossible for me to obtain it. For if he say, I am no scholar, I am a poor, ignorant man; unto poor, ignorant men the gospel is preached, and Christ declares himself to be their wisdom; and he says, "If you lack, ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and he will supply you." If a man say, I am a sinner, we meet him again with these words, This righteousness of God, which is the "prize of thy high calling," is declared in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. By believing in this righteousness, by cleaving to it, thou becomest delivered from the plague of thy sins. By looking up to this brazen serpent, thou art healed of the bite of that serpent which has been stinging thy conscience so long. Thou risest up a new man, having the new and pure and righteous life of Christ im-

parted to thee. If a man says, But can I lay hold on this prize? how can I embrace it? This knowledge of God seems higher than heaven, how can I reach it? deeper than hell, how can I enter into it? Lo! God bringeth the prize near to thee; he says, In my well beloved Son is contained all the excellency of my goodness and glory; in his body and blood, freely offered on the cross, are contained all the love and holiness that thou requirest, and behold that body and blood, I, by my ministers, do set before you; I invite you to come and partake of it; I ask you to come with repentant and thankful hearts; and I myself promise to feed you with that bread and water of life, of which whoever partaketh shall never hunger or thirst. And if any one says, But this too is out of my reach, it is with my heart, not with my lips, I must eat, and that heart must be repentant and thankful, but it is cold and dead, this also we meet; for he promises by his Spirit to give you repentance, to give you thankfulness, to enable your heart "to feed on him by faith with thanksgiving."

2. I say then this prize which our spirits require, and which alone is substantial and enduring and incorruptible, is set before us all, is freely given to us all. But here is another point in which this race resembles the other race we were speaking of just now. All run, but some only receive the prize. It was not so in the games, as I have said already, because the prize was denied to any; there was great care to prevent partiality; there were special judges appointed to see that each man had fair play, and to award the prizes to those who had really won them. You may say, It is otherwise surely in the contests of the world; many get on in it by sheer cheating; and so no doubt it is. Still, on the whole, those who have labored most diligently are most likely to win the things they labor for. And yet in both these cases, it is one that winneth the prize, and many are disappointed. How is it in that race which St. Paul bids the Corinthians run? There, as I showed you, "the prize of the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus" is freely

held out to all; it is conferred on all of pure grace, and there is a most just Judge of the course, who will see that none fails through any misfortune; nay, who desires nothing so much as that all should win. For remember, that this is a prize which all may win — the success of one does not exclude another; all may possess this glory together, as all may enjoy the light of the same sun together. And yet it will be true here also, that many run, and some only win the prize. Why so? Because some only care for the prize, because some only believe and steadfastly remember that the knowledge of God, the possession of his eternal righteousness and love, the "seeing him as he is," are the rewards which they want, and without which they cannot live. They disbelieve or they forget this, and, therefore, they set their hearts on the pursuit of other prizes which are not incorruptible, garlands in which there are only leaves that are withering or already withered; and because their hearts become wholly enamoured of these, wholly absorbed in them, it becomes

impossible for them to think of that higher good, which is yet ever offering itself to them, ever coming near to them, wooing them to accept it, giving them a taste of its own sweetness, making them feel for a moment the paltriness and pettiness of all other things that they long for. But —

3. There is yet another point in which this prize and this race resemble the other. It is in the conduct of those who do win the race and obtain the prize.

They keep under their bodies, and bring them into subjection. I told you how literally this was the case with the runners in these games — how carefully they restrained themselves from ordinary gratifications that they might be fit and free for the contest. I hinted to you, also, that men, in striving to be rich, or powerful, or wise, do, in like manner, submit to great hardships, and give up many things which their inclinations are lusting after. Now, St. Paul says, if a man has this prize of the knowledge of God steadily in view, he also will do this. His body

does not crave after this prize; it longs after things to taste and smell and handle. If you give it its way, if you let it have the mastery, these will be your objects, for these you will be striving. It is mere common-sense, therefore, to see that you keep this body under, that you teach it to be a servant, and not a lord, which is not to tell you, but to be told by you, what is good. St. Paul does not make it any merit to restrain this body from its indulgences and lusts, it is merely a point of plain wisdom which no one who is really in earnest, really means to seek God and his glory, can neglect. We do neglect it, alas! but we do it at our peril — we neglect it, because we neglect, at the same time, the thought of the glorious prize which God is offering us; that prize of being found in Christ; that prize of "awaking up in his likeness, and of being satisfied" with it.

My dear brethren, God himself is bringing your bodies into subjection. He himself is taking from you the power of indulging and gratifying them; yea, even of enjoying that,

which, when you were healthy, he put within your reach. Oh, take advantage of the moment, prize the lesson he is teaching you. Believe that he himself is your teacher and trainer — that while he is breaking down these bodies of yours, he is holding out to your spirits that blessedness, respecting which St. Paul declared, that he "counted all things but as loss, yea, as dung, that he might win it." Believe that your heavenly Father is not dealing hardly with you, that by this discipline he is claiming you for his children, is fulfilling the promise of your baptism, is teaching you what it is to be "inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." As the commissioned minister, as the ambassador of Christ, I beseech you to submit yourself to God's holy Spirit, to receive his discipline, to let him bring your bodies into subjection that he may raise up your spirits to embrace Christ, and to feed upon him, that he may finally raise up those bodies and spirits together to make them like unto his own glorious body, and his own glorious Spirit.

And now, having fulfilled this duty which I owe to you, let me tell you very earnestly that you owe a duty to me. Those are dreadful words with which St. Paul concludes this passage of his letter to the Corinthians. He does not say, Bring your bodies into subjection lest you be cast away; but he says, "I do this lest, having preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

If St. Paul, called of Christ himself, God's own apostle, used this language of himself, do not you think that we all of us ought to use it too? If we do not use it and feel it, must it not be because we have not enough of the spirit of St. Paul? Should not you earnestly desire for us that more of that spirit may be given us, that we may have more holy fear, more watchfulness, more sense of the grandeur of the prize which is set before us, and of the horror of losing it after we have been permitted to present it to you. Oh, pray, for the honor of Christ our Mediator and Advocate, that not one of those whom he permits to declare his own gospel to men,

to come to them when they are sick, to offer to them his own blessed body and blood, may be found wanting in that day "when the chief Shepherd shall appear," and when all who have waited for him shall receive his crown of righteousness.

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